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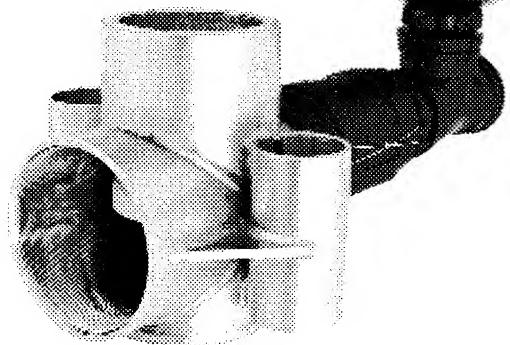
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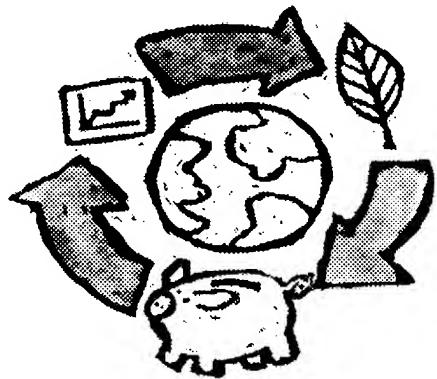
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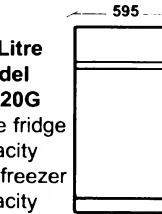
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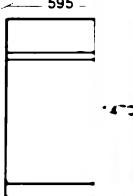
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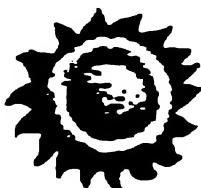
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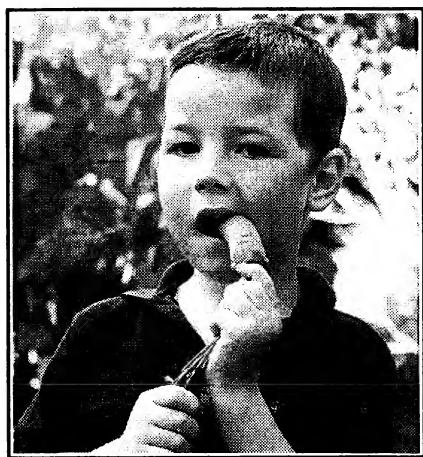
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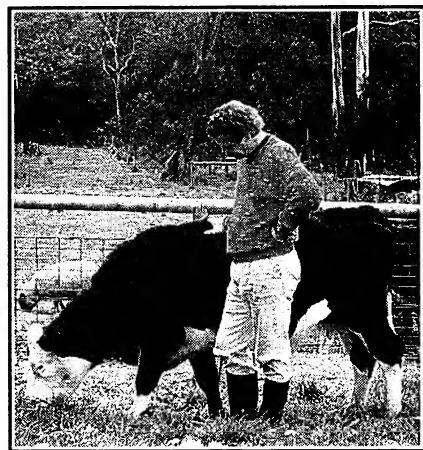
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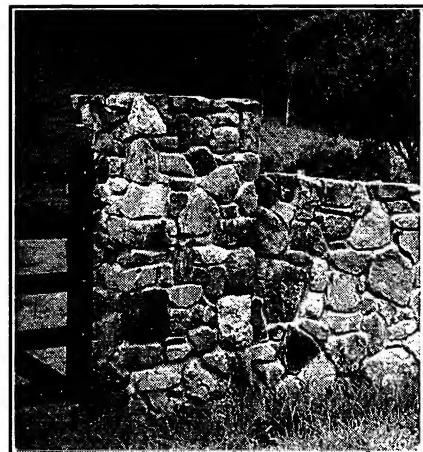
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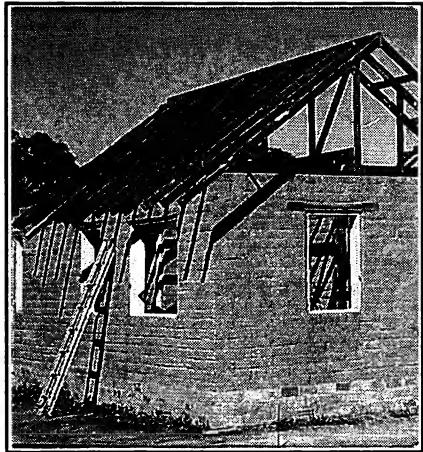
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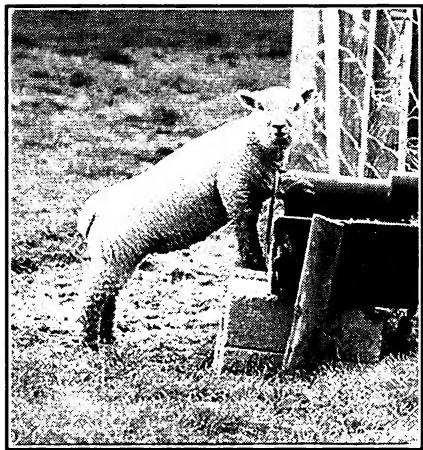
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COVER PHOTOS

Front Cover: Aleasa Williams runs a food seedling nursery, and permaculture garden at the Old Butter Factory, Bellingen, NSW. She is impressed with the idea of the community market as the focus for a sustainable village. See her story on page 6.

Back Cover: Is it an idyllic rural scene, or merely loads of back-breaking work? Read all about the realities of country living in Jill Fraser's enlightening account of what does happen when a 'country' girl marries a 'city' boy. page 21.

Edited by Megg Miller and Mary Horsfall.



GUMNUT GOSSIP

by Megg Miller.

It had to happen sometime. A chook of course, sneaking into the van and not showing herself until halfway to work. This thrill seeker didn't utter a peep until it was too late to take her home. Actually, it wasn't much of a day out, she was confined to a large box at the front of the office and the only activity came from people peering in and talking to her. Poor chookie, she clenched her beak tightly and sat glowering, quietly laying an egg and not emitting one boastful word about it. That evening, Suni rang to remind me to take the bird home. 'Put the box where you'll almost trip over it, otherwise you'll forget.' Chookie sat quiet and unrestrained in the back on the return journey and had to be forcibly evicted from the van. It was a bit of fun for everyone, but do chooks have dreams, yearn for the bright lights of an office?

We know our readers are clever with their hands, but did you realise many are thinkers and philosophers as well? The bulging envelopes we receive attest to this. Roberino's regular recycling contributions are familiar to everyone, he is also a wordy philosopher on all aspects of the universe. A selection of writing arrived from long-time reader Bob Gibson from Woomargama, NSW. Our article on growing giant carrots in the issue 141 struck a chord with Bob who produced a giant from his carrot plot a couple of years ago. The photo of him with his 'beast' was too good to keep to ourselves, and I'm sure you'll approve his inclusion. Bob swears the carrot was a one-off, as none of the others exceeded normal size. For a bit of fun he named it 'Alf's great-grandfather' and, 'after three winters perched above the fireplace it shrunk, distorted and withered to become one-third its original size and into something that could only be called grotesque!' Sounds a bad look Bob, but many thanks for sharing it with us along with your awe inspiring array of writing.

Alan Stewart of Alexandra Hills, Qld is another reader who keeps the articles and snippets of news coming in regularly. He brought our attention to a press cutting in a local newspaper. It appears diet-related illness is significant in the Queensland bush; reasons being the preference for all-meat meals (if it doesn't moo or move it's not really appetising) and the high cost of fruit and vegetables due to storage and trans-

port costs. The article highlighted a three-year scheme to increase consumption in remote communities. Alan's comment is probably what many readers will also think; hasn't the government, or the people, heard of self-sufficiency, bush Tucker or edible landscaping? And what about greywater, is there none to spare for gardening? Can anyone shed light on why gardening isn't encouraged or carried out?

Just occasionally we encounter hiccups with the Grassified, so when someone rings and says they want to talk about their advert our first thought is: have we made a mistake? When a reader rang recently it wasn't to discuss mistakes, but to say his particular advert had inadvertently attracted a couple of prospective partners. Although not in the running for a relationship, he was bemused by the love-

ly letters he had received and wanted to share the situation with us. 'No names and not for Gumnut Gossip,' he said, but really, we're not letting him get away with that. You're probably thinking our thoughts - who could be so lucky? If the Grassifieds increase greatly next issue we'll know why!

Putting together the first GR each year is always exciting, what with the rush caused by our Christmas break and the optimism that a brand new year brings. What's in store for 2001? Good news we hope. Increased awareness in the environmental field, less chemicals and pollutants to harm our health, and more along these lines. We hope all readers can start on a high note, and live the year in a way that brings optimum personal and community satisfaction. Roll on 2001.



Bob Gibson with his giant carrot - 'Alf's great-grandfather'.

PASSIONATE ABOUT PERMACULTURE

by David Miller, Yea, Vic.

Aleasa Williams has always been passionate about gardening. Her intense interest in plants has taken her on a fascinating journey through landscaping, horticultural studies, and permaculture, to visit countries overseas where she gained insight into the role of food production and rural communities. Aleasa is now operating a nursery and permaculture demonstration garden at the Old Butter Factory, Bellingen, NSW.

After completing her HSC, Aleasa Williams left high school with one thought in mind – to have a job outdoors. 'I have always been a Grass Roots person,' she said, 'so I was determined not to be locked up in an office, wearing a blouse and skirt, and putting lipstick on every morning.' This outlook led her to a career working on golf courses. For the next five

years she learned and perfected the aesthetics of landscaping, as well as green keeping, repairing and rebuilding bunkers, and, on rainy days in winter, learning the intricacies of machine maintenance and repair. She also learned to appreciate how valuable it was to work in a team environment and to help build morale.

Her next position was that of nurs-

ery assistant in the horticultural section of a TAFE college. While there she completed her horticultural certificate and gained valuable experience in managing a nursery. This was largely through running a huge glasshouse production unit attached to the college. It was here Aleasa was introduced to permaculture. 'I couldn't believe my luck when one of the



Aleasa proudly displays her open-pollinated seedlings. She is enthusiastic about encouraging growers to try these productive, sustainable varieties.

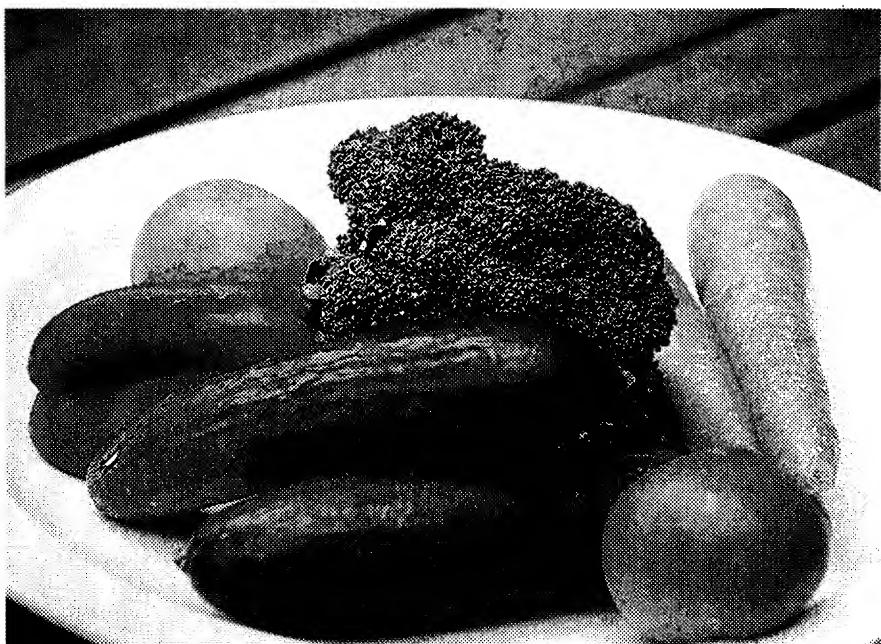
electives in my third year was all about a system of agriculture that perfectly suited my beliefs. It just seemed like lateral common sense!' She also assisted in teaching and eventually became technical officer, setting up demonstrations for classes.

With no disrespect to the position, Aleasa explains, 'I became bored again and left to start my own nursery. It was a real struggle and I had two or three jobs at the time to help keep it going. I then decided to travel overseas, and went for a long look around the UK, Europe, the Middle East and North Africa. What struck me most was the pride with which growers present their food at the markets, I mean fresh food. Without exception, they present it beautifully, and sell it with great enthusiasm. I really missed this when I returned to Australia.'

Aleasa returned with an American husband and with her first child on the way. She eventually contacted the owner of the Old Butter Factory at Bellingen to see if there was any garden maintenance needed. He encouraged her to start her own business. After some thought, Aleasa decided that 'there was an opening for chemical-free, naturally grown nonhybrid seedlings'.

Aleasa's main interest now is her nursery and demonstration permaculture garden at the Old Butter Factory. Her business provides the local community with naturally grown, hardy seedlings which will produce food for the family as well as giving them something to sell at the local produce market. Aleasa sells seedlings and herbs in pots, grown without artificial fertilisers or chemicals. She believes nonhybrid varieties are stronger and hardier. Not only do they produce prolific healthy crops, the huge variety available gives growers a wide choice, and, when they set seed, this can be kept to sow a true-to-type crop in the following year. With hybrids, you have to purchase seed every time you wish to grow the crop.

Aleasa has a strong affinity with permaculture. She describes it as a technique for the lazy gardener who would rather set up a system of food production for the long term than just fulfill their needs month by month. With permaculture techniques, gardening is simpler, more efficient, and sustainable, and organic practices



Fresh produce grown from Aleasa's open-pollinated seedlings is available for sale at the Natural Produce Market in Bellingen.

eliminate pollution of the environment and protect the health of those consuming the food.

During her travels overseas, Aleasa realised the importance of sustainability for rural communities. Through her nursery, many local people purchase seedlings to grow fresh vegetables and herbs for sale at the Natural Produce Market held at the Bellingen Showgrounds every second Saturday. Over 500 people turn up to purchase their needs for the fortnight from stallholders. 'Just the presence of a regular market has been important in motivating more people to grow and sell fresh produce,' Aleasa says. 'It has the potential to sustain the whole Bellingen Valley, and it keeps the money in the community.'

Aleasa says she would now like to work more as a consultant, assisting people on small or large properties to produce fresh food in a more sustainable manner. She certainly has the knowledge and experience to make this move a success. Until then, however, you can meet Aleasa, and perhaps

her daughter, Brooke (now nearly six years old), at the Natural Produce Market every second and fourth Saturday of the month. Alternatively, start your garden with seedlings from the nursery at the Old Butter Factory, Bellingen, NSW.

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Tomatoes? Double Your Crop

by Bob Rankin, Harbord, NSW.

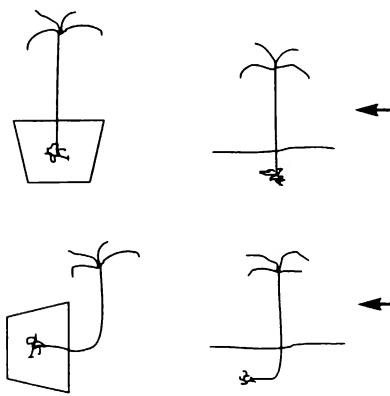
Because of its versatility and flavour the tomato is probably the most popular crop of any vegetable gardener. I know it has always been mine, so when an old gardener gave me a tip on how to double my tomato crop I jumped at the chance. He reckoned that all plants depended for their growth on the nutrients they could draw from the soil. He said they did this through their roots and that if you could increase the number of roots a plant had, it would naturally grow more and better fruit. So the answer to better crops is simply to increase the size of the rooting system.

This is hard to do with most plants, but very easy to do with a tomato. When your tomato seedlings are five to six centimetres tall transplant the strongest seedlings into small individual containers. Plant the seedling quite deeply into the soil of the new container, then (and here is the secret) lay the container on its side so that the plant is lying horizontally. Don't worry, after a few days the plant will be growing up at a right angle.

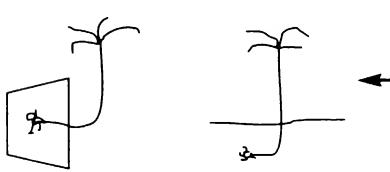
When the seedling is about eight centimetres high ease it out of the container, together with the soil, and plant it as far up to the lowest leaf as you can in its permanent position in the garden.



Planted this way you have far more stalk than usual ~~under~~ the ground. This means you are going to get far more roots growing out of this stalk and, you've guessed it, the more roots you have the more tomatoes you will get. Try it next time your tomato seedlings start growing — I guarantee you'll never grow tomatoes the old way again.



old transplanting method



new method gives much greater root growth

Bushfire Resistant Design

by David Holmgren, Hepburn, Vic.

Bushfire resistant design has been a long-standing area of research and design for me. The following features of our house design and construction contribute to the likely survival of the house in any bushfire.

- On-ground construction, set into hillside, with low profile roof.
- Steel rod from the foundations to the top plates, triple-grip nail plates and self-drilling roof screws into hardwood battens ensure security of roof in severe storm conditions (including firestorm).
- Minimum of rough timber surfaces and preference for painted timber in vulnerable situations. Structural separation of timber pergolas from house framing. Absence of timber decks or other slatted timber structures.
- Six millimetre glass on greenhouse (rough toughened) and clerestory to resist damage, including during firestorm. The plan to double glaze the clerestory will increase the safety of this most vulnerable glazing.

- Fully enclosed roof eaves and fibreglass batt stripping under ends of roofing iron to prevent entry of burning embers.

- Metal flywire covered roof vents and external flyscreens on louvre windows.

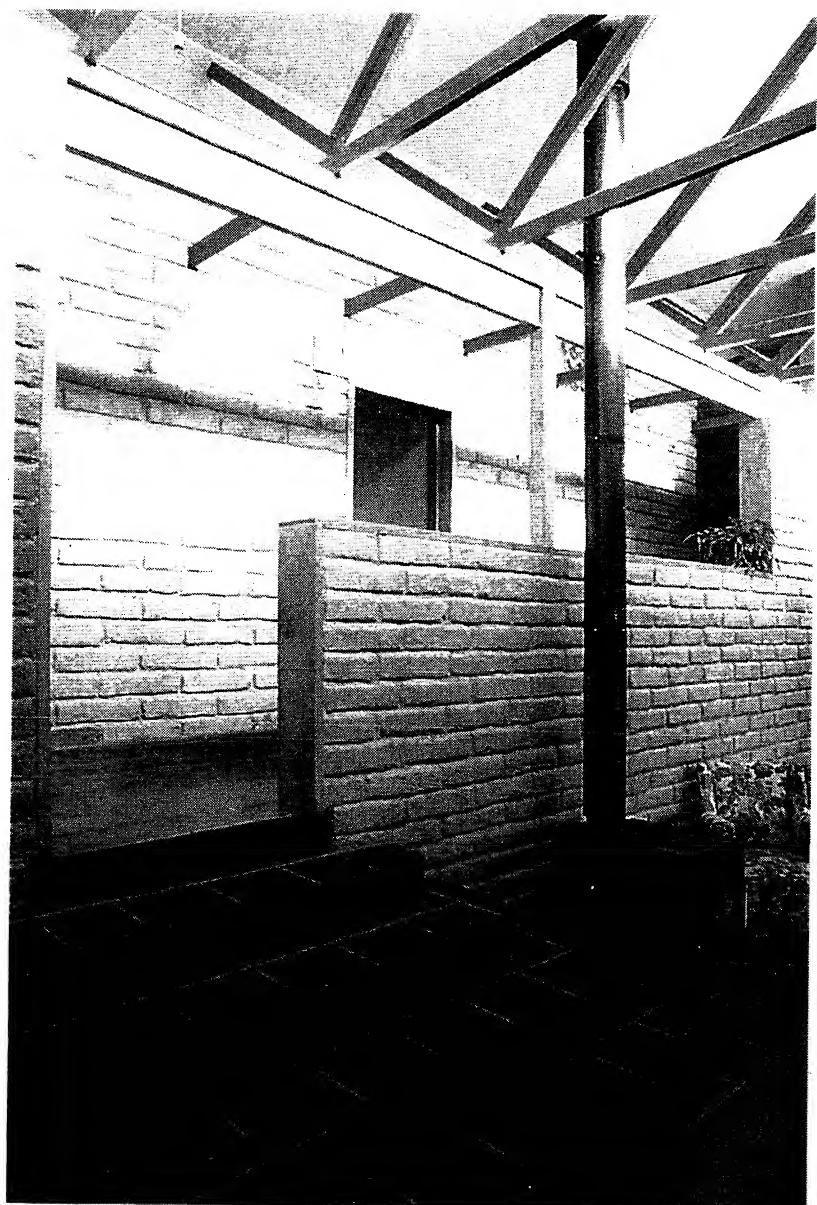
Contrary to popular belief, the mudbrick walls are not a particularly important factor in the fire resistant design.

Two factors in our design increase the risk of severe damage from fire inside the house (from any source).

- The trusses are vulnerable to catching alight because they are exposed, so they are dressed, painted hardwood to reduce the risk substantially.

- The connection between the workshop, undercroft and cool cupboard could lead to rapid spread of a workshop fire through the building. A heavy door between the workshop and undercroft reduces this hazard.

The shed and barn with rough sawn timber and open design are hardly fire resistant buildings and contain very flammable materials, including fuel, firewood, raked timber, mulch etc. In a



Winter sunlight from clerestory is absorbed by thermal mass of mudbrick internal walls. Hardwood trusses have greater resistance to burning in any house fire.

catastrophic fire these could be hard to save, but the strong construction ensures they will not blow apart and threaten the house, while the microspray system around the eaves of both buildings dramatically increases their chance of survival in these conditions.

Exposed hardwood trusses allow

entry of winter sunlight from the clerestory, which is then absorbed by thermal mass of mudbrick internal walls. The split level encourages movement of warm air from greenhouse, wood stove and backup wood heater to the bedrooms on the south side. Doors (open) control flow of heat,

Right: Clerestory with short eave overhang under a bullnose to exclude summer sun. Fire resistant roofing material.

especially to laundry (centre) and bathroom. Slate covered mudbrick steps provide additional thermal mass and informal seating. Blackwood steps, cypress balustrade, door framing and flooring are all bushfire salvage timber from Mt Macedon. Note that hardwood trusses have greater resistance to burning in any house fire.

The clerestory has a short eave overhang under a bullnose to exclude summer sun. A triangular insulated opening provides venting after hot days. Trim roof provides bracing for roof trusses, eliminating the need for bracing across face of clerestory and contributing to low fire hazard roof profile.

In proximity to the house the slashed and grazed irrigated orchard provides a first line of defence. Dense tagasaste and other low fire hazard hedges shelter irrigated food gardens around the barn, shed and house. A spray system around the eaves of barn and shed provides extra security.

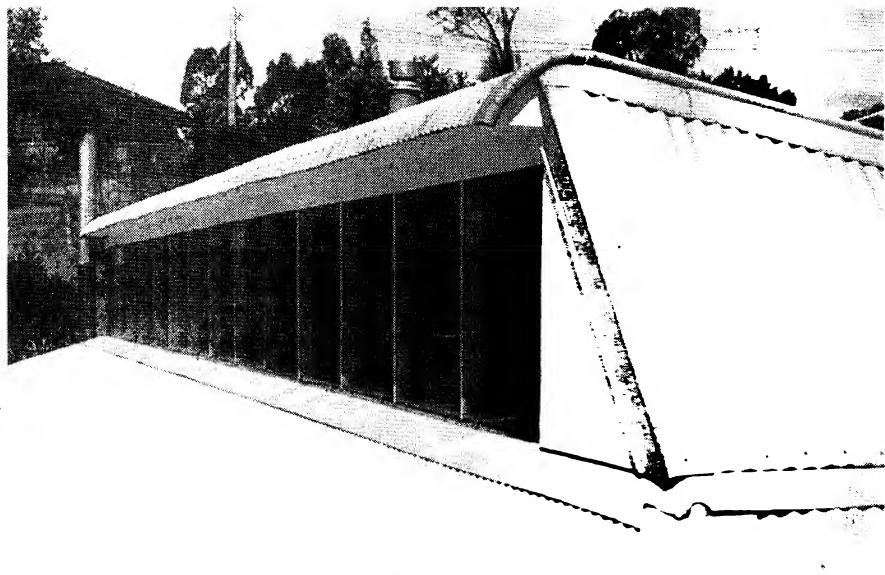
This article has been reprinted from *Hepburn Permaculture Gardens*, by David Holmgren, currently out of print but expected to be available again soon. Other current titles are: *Trees On The Treeless Plains*, *Permaculture in the Bush* and *The Flywire House*. David Holmgren and Su Dennett hold intensive residential permaculture courses at their Hepburn Springs property. Courses run for seven days and are seasonally based. For enquiries contact David Holmgren, 16 Fourteenth St, Hepburn 3461, ph: 03-5348-3636. Also check out the website: <http://www.spacountry.net.au/holmgren>

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NATIONAL WEEDS STRATEGY

After extensive consultation with the states and territories, the Commonwealth Government has released an official listing of Australia's 20 most destructive weeds. Wilson Tuckey, Commonwealth Minister for Forestry and Conservation, said the listing is of national significance and weeds were 'selected according to their invasive-

ness; economic, environmental and social impacts, current distribution; potential for spread and effect in reducing the growth of desirable plants'. Tuckey sees the list being helpful to community groups in determining their priorities. For more information on the National Weeds Strategy contact John Thorp on 03-6344-9657.

ENVIRONMENTAL WEEDS

| Common Name | Scientific Name |
|---|---|
| alligator weed | <i>Alternanthera philoxeroides</i> |
| athel pine | <i>Tamarix aphylla</i> |
| bitou bush/boneseed | <i>Chrysanthemoides monilifera</i> |
| blackberry | <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> spp. |
| bridal creeper | <i>Asparagus asparagoides</i> |
| cabomba | <i>Cabomba caroliniana</i> |
| Chilean needle grass | <i>Nassella neesiana</i> |
| gorse | <i>Ulex europaeus</i> |
| hymenachne | <i>Hymenachne articulata</i> |
| lantana | <i>Lantana camara</i> |
| mesquite | <i>Prosopis</i> spp. |
| mimosa | <i>Mimosa pigra</i> |
| parkinsonia | <i>Parkinsonia aculeata</i> |
| parthenium weed | <i>Parthenium hysterophorus</i> |
| pond apple | <i>Annona glabra</i> |
| prickly acacia | <i>Acacia nilotica</i> spp. <i>Indica</i> |
| rubber vine | <i>Cryptostegia grandiflora</i> |
| salvinia | <i>Salvinia molesta</i> |
| serrated tussock | <i>Nassella trichotoma</i> |
| willows, except weeping willow, pussy willow and sterile pussy willow | <i>Salix californica</i> and <i>Salix reichardtii</i> |

Doing What Comes Naturally

by Brigid Kelly, Craigie, WA.

What do you do with your snails? How do you cope with acres of invasive bracken fern? Are newspapers good for my garden? Have you ever asked or been asked any of these questions?

Some people are natural recyclers and were doing it before ever the word became fashionable. I remember my grandmother meticulously storing away every scrap of string, ribbon, rubber bands, pins, nails, with a, 'You never know when it will come in'. As a child I was not sure exactly what 'coming in' was, but eventually learned it was simply an abbreviated form of 'It could come in handy/useful'.

Now the experts and statisticians tell us that we are a nation of consumers and that across the board we do little to conserve resources. I have in my time, however, met some conservators *par excellence* and will introduce you to a few.

First, there is my old friend John Hutchinson who has devoted his life to recording the sounds of our native birds and is now also collecting frog calls. His works are published on cassette and CD, although his first two albums of bird calls were initially released in record form.

His autobiography, entitled 'Save That Song', allows his readers an insight into how the young John conserved his resources and learned many skills in order to eventually devote his life to his recording. Growing much of his own food, drying beans and fruit, preserving fruit in discarded sealtop jars donated by friends, grinding flour from a variety of grains, John is largely self-sufficient.

I must admit to being amazed when I see people throwing snails over the fence onto the road or into a vacant lot. It seems such a waste of time. In my experience a displaced snail soon finds its way home again! Personally, I tend to tread on them and then bury the crushings, but have to admit that is a messy business.

On my last visit to the Hutchinson cottage I was introduced to another of

John's ideas. John goes on a snail run in the early hours of the morning when his garden in Dunsborough in the south-west is moist with dew, dropping his haul into large plastic containers partly filled with water. The filled containers sit for several months and then John dilutes the very potent brew and uses it as liquid manure.

Large compost heaps take care of the piles of weeds and clippings produced, and John's garden thrives. His parsley, at about a metre high and a lush deep green, is the richest I have ever seen.

When John bought his Dunsborough cottage he needed more space for the large collection of materials associated with his recording. As well as recording equipment for field trips, he has precision recorders for editing his recordings and making the master tapes. To house all this and his stock (John also does all of his own distribution of published materials.) the cottage had to expand and this was achieved by adding a second storey. The utility room which resulted is a homely room with potbelly stove for cooking and heating, sink and storage space to one side. The room is almost completely skirted by work benches where John has set up work stations for each task.

A special touch to this room is the panelling of the walls which John did himself using waste wood from a local pine mill. The offcuts, complete with bark, form fascinating patterns and each wall has its own story for those who have the imagination. Even without the imagination the colours and textures are a very attractive finish.

Another interesting person I visited was Paul Nolan on his out-of-town property near Pemberton, deep in the karri forest. Having built his home out of mudbricks made by himself and his partner, he is a man who also sees everything as having a purpose.

When he looked across the fields of bracken fern which invades that part of the country, and is regarded as a pest

by farmers, he reasoned that it must have a use. Disregarding advice to poison it, plough it in or burn it, he set out to discover that use.

He had heard of someone in Victoria who had ground and processed bracken to form 'peat', so travelled east to learn more. After setting himself up with some basic equipment, he has been able to produce a viable mulch using bracken, harvested and baled like hay. The bracken is allowed to dry for a year before he puts it through a mill, along with other ingredients such as paper collected from local businesses, seaweed and fowl manure from his own birds. This mix is then allowed to compost for a time before use. Paul's own garden, rich in herbs and vegetables, bears witness to the value of his product.

Meanwhile, in the suburbs, another gardener is building up her sandy soil and making a fertile and productive garden. Mary Lee decided that as the years progressed she would not be able to haul mowers up and down steps in her terraced garden, so set about eliminating the lawns.

Having dug a pond to encourage frogs to her garden and planted the surrounding area like a miniature rainforest, she needed to establish boundaries and pathways. Her answer was to use the strips of bark which constantly fell from her own and her neighbour's trees. Having broken this into chips and laid them over a very thick layer of newspaper, she set out bark paths which look natural and attractive.

Mary uses a bicycle to get around and noticed strips of bark in parks and beside the road, so started collecting in earnest and mulched her front rose bed as well.

She plans to collect bark and break it into chips which she can store for renewing the paths when necessary. Her hope is that the paths will eventually be a rich composty mix which she can rake up and use to mulch the garden beds. She will then lay more paper and bark, making new paths.

RECYCLING RUNS RIOT

Swap Meets and Car Parts

by Roberino, Arrawarra Beach, NSW.

While reading the Saturday newspaper some years ago, I saw that the local swap meet was being held the next day. What the heck is a swap meet I wondered! It couldn't be anything to do with wife swapping because the ad mentioned cars and car parts. An incurable impulsive/compulsive behavioural car nut and petrol head from about five years old (when I was given my first Dinky toy), I couldn't resist.

'Be early,' quoted the advertisement + 'gates open at 6am'. By 4am I had woken, showered, had a cuppa. Still two hours to go. Why was I doing this? I was so early, I even beat the ticket collectors at the gate and saved \$2. I was told they don't charge the insane.

Some stallholders had camped in their cars so as to get an early start and save on motel bills. In order to sleep in their cars and vans they had moved the car parts, car magazines, automobilia and bric-a-brac from inside their vehicles onto the ground outside.

Half a dozen earlybirds were examining the piles of dubious goods with torches. How far will some people go, I wondered.

As daylight broke, I was looking at some parts for my car when the HQ van nearby with open tailgate jerked slightly and the most ear-piercing squeal erupted from within. I raised my eyes to see a naked woman sitting up in 'bed' screaming her lungs out. I don't know who got the biggest shock, and I would never have noticed her but for the yelling. A bad dream? Who knows? Another bloke nearby remarked, 'Well that's different!' There are some funny characters at swap meets I've learned, having been to over a dozen now. No one, it would seem, is what you'd call 'ordinary'.

Whether you own a 10-year-old car or an 80-year-old one, there is always something of interest. At one swap meet I bought a good power drill for \$5 and two as-new tail lights for my car for \$10 the pair. I'd hate to think what the wreckers would charge, and don't even mention new part prices.

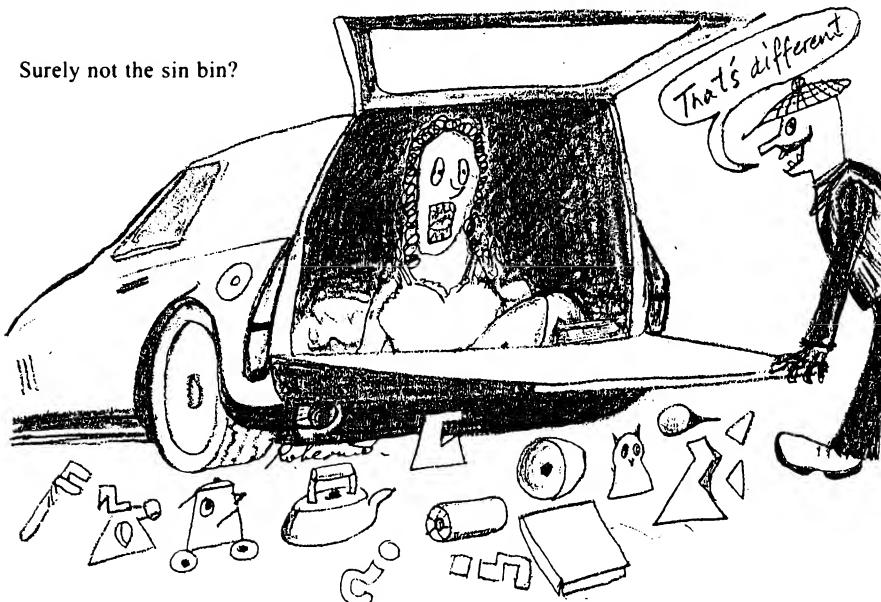
You can find old 1960s cameras, T-model Ford bits (some new), push-bikes, 1920s motorbikes, crockery, gadgets, 1930s farm machinery (some old and rusty, others restored and looking like new). In fact, a large amount of

parts for cars and trucks are NOS (new old stock); the contents of old garages or service stations that failed to sell the parts when the cars were new and are trying to recoup some losses. Now that the old car and classic car restoration movement is so strong it's amazing how much NOS is resurfacing after so many years on the shelf unsold.

These swap meets are a great day out and I have made many acquaintances, even new friends, and the cost of running my car has decreased as I've now many contacts for businesses specialising in my make of car and its parts. Much free advice and much anecdotal evidence of what to do and not to do, gossip, lies and jokes. It's a car boot sale on a grand scale.

How do you know when they are on? *Just World Cars* is a monthly magazine in all newsagents that gives readers free advertising for their cars and old car parts. I can't think of a more organised system for recycling older cars' parts than swap meets. If you must have a car, just think of the environment and the tonnes of greenhouse gases that manufacturing industries spew out every minute of every day, every year, just for car parts - recycling saves much of this.

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Keeping The Dream Alive

by Jenny Lacey, Red Lion, Vic.

I can clearly remember the surge of emotions I felt when I bought and read my first copy of *Grass Roots*. It was number 19, and the predominant emotions were joy, knowing that I was not the only person in Australia yearning for the quiet country life, and another feeling that has never left me since that time, the feeling of comradeship.

Even though many of the GR family live quite different lives from one another, they still have that common bond of independence, wanting to do their own thing, a love of nature and her many facets, and a wish to tread lightly on the earth and, somehow, leave it better than they found it.

For many years, I struggled to keep my dream alive – a place in the country where I could grow my own fruit and vegies, spin my own wool and make my own clothes, the same dream others were already living. I bought all the books by John Seymour and others, grew as many vegies as I could manage in my suburban backyard and tried to ignore the rude remarks hurled in my direction by my then-partner. He also tended to reinforce his remarks with fists.



Above: Mudbricks galore drying in the sun.



It took five years to make and lay the mudbricks, meanwhile we lived in half of the storage shed.

Eventually, the marriage broke down and I drifted about for several years, trying to find an anchor. This eventuated when Ted came into my life. I introduced him to GR and tentatively suggested we buy a country block and build our own house. He agreed. We bought all the books we could find on the subject, found our dream block and began to build. After a year of commuting back and forth from Melbourne, we decided to live here permanently and made our move, just as the recession started to be felt.

For five years, we lived in half of the storage shed while we made and laid mudbricks, finally moving into the house in 1994. When we started to build, we used the money from the sale of the previous house, but that didn't last too long and everything slowed down when we were reduced to using our pension money for materials. The house was quite cosy, but there were lots of 'fiddly bits' still to be completed – eave linings, wardrobes, a cupboard for the workroom, paving in the courtyard, stuff like that.

We make a few extra dollars by selling Ted's woodwork and my 'crafty'

things at the monthly Pleasant Street Craft Market in Ballarat, which not only helps us to buy materials for the house, but also pays for the occasional meal out or an evening at the pictures. The orchard continues to grow, but the vegie garden leaves a lot to be desired. I can't tackle it, because of that insidious disease, arthritis, and, now, a ruptured tendon in my leg; and Ted is a woodworker, not a gardener, and has no patience with the chores that have to be done all the time, like weeding, checking for pests and eliminating them, and so on. Still, he does very well with his tomatoes and onions. We just need a *little* more variety.

Now, pushing the boundaries of old age, I look back at the wonderful friendships GR has engendered and wonder what sort of insipid life I might be leading had I not discovered it. It doesn't bear thinking about. On a nice, warm day, Ted and I sit out in the sun and look at our beautiful view across to the Pyrenees, ever-changing, always inspiring, a view we never tire of seeing. We would no more dream of living in the city again than we would of flying to the moon. GR has helped us to realise our

dream house in the country and I feel sure that there will always be a young person in the city, somewhere, looking for the inspiration to leave and do their own thing – here's hoping *Grass Roots* will be there to supply that inspiration for a long time to come! I'll be reading GR till I'm pushing up daisies.

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IN PRAISE OF BEANS

by Rae Sexton, Gilberton, SA.



In GR 117 Nevin Sweeney wrote how he grew a vertical garden, not having much horizontal space. Climbing beans did particularly well, but the family would not eat them because they disliked the flavour. My Israeli neighbours similarly grew a wonderful crop of Purple King beans over the carport, during a summer of over 40°C heat, but the family refused to eat them. I cooked some beans off their vines and found them delicious. I tried to persuade them to take young beans, up to 10 centimetres long, and cook them in a minimum of boiling water for about five minutes (or slice them and steam them). The strange purple colour fades on cooking and they turn a normal green. Keep picking beans young to keep the crop coming. Mature pods of any bean have a

stronger, often unpleasant flavour – notably broad beans. Runner beans become quite hairy and stringy. These beans can be shelled and the seeds cooked like green peas, served with butter or white sauce, but it is best to get them when semi-mature.

BEAN TIPS

- To cope with a large crop, blanch each day's surplus bounty for three minutes, drain, place in serving size plastic bags and cool rapidly under cold water, then freeze.
- Think about the ill effects of lead petrol and don't plant them near a street or in a driveway.
- Scarlet runner beans need cool temperatures to set the fruit and have a dormant, permanent root stock.
- French beans are susceptible to salty water – more so than green peas – such as bore water or River Murray water in a dry season.
- Purple King are extremely hardy and prolific and form a tall, thick green screen. Birds can get among them to clean up aphids and red spiders.
- Lime soils are quite beneficial to bean crops.
- Butter beans are the sweetest beans and also come as climbers. They can be sliced, cooked, drained and served cold with vinaigrette dressing as a salad.
- Mung beans can be sprouted for salads.

GRANDMOTHER'S REMEDIES

by L J Wojcicki, Casino, NSW.

Following the discovery of antibiotics in the 1940s, Western medicine turned away from the natural remedies our grandmothers depended on so much to keep the family healthy and well. High-fibre diets were progressively replaced with fast foods, and in place of herbal teas, cod-liver oil and vaporubs appeared penicillin, doxycycline hydrochlorides, streptomycin, bacitracin, fumagillin, carbomycin, chlortetracycline, erythromycin and others.

Subsequently, new lifestyles, insecurity of employment and diet changes, which have taken place in most Western countries, are said to be increasing the incidence of a variety of cancers, high levels of cholesterol, blood pressure, diabetes, asthma and allergies to some foods and substances usually innocuous to most people.

The immunity of harmful bacteria and viruses to a variety of antibiotics in recent times has induced scientists and pharmaceutical companies around the world to search for cures among the natural remedies our grandmothers once used, but which were abandoned a few decades ago for new 'miraculous' drugs of the future.



GARLIC

Garlic, for example, was used even before biblical times for flavouring food and as medicine. Now scientists have rediscovered that garlic can reduce the risk of coronary heart disease by lowering high blood pressure and cholesterol levels. Research conducted into garlic's remedial properties by Professor Christopher Silagy, the head of the Faculty of General Practice at Flinders University in Adelaide, has shown that use of kwai garlic at a dose of 750 milligrams a day has lowered blood pressure in some patients over a period of one to three months and has reduced the level of cholesterol by up to ten percent.

Garlic's remedial properties were known to Pliny the Elder (AD 23 – 79)

and mentioned in his *Historia Naturalis*, and also by the Greek, Theophrastus (370 – 285 BC), and a few others.

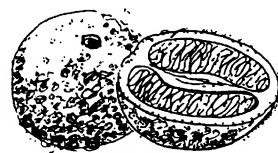
WINE

Equally well known by the ancients for their remedial properties have been grapes, and their final product – wine. In ancient Babylon, Egypt and Persia wine was given a divine status. In Greece, Dionysius became the god of wine and in Rome it was Bacchus. Another to recognise the remedial properties of wine and grapes was the Arab physician Abdul-Asana Al Muhtara Ibn Butlana. He dedicated several chapters to them in his book, which was subsequently translated into Latin and became a medical bible in the Middle Ages in Europe. Its Latin title was *Theatrum Sanitatis*.

The next serious attempt to recognise the remedial properties of grapes and wine was made in the 19th century by the American physician Dr Edward Cayce. His dietary program designed for patients afflicted with tumors included both grapes and red wine. He was credited with considerable success in curing some patients. In recent years increasing numbers of scientists, dieticians and naturopaths around the world recommend both grapes and wine, especially red wine, as a beneficial part of the human diet.

GRAPEFRUIT

The most promising natural remedy, however, in our fight with cancers, 'rediscovered' once again by Western medicine in recent years, is the grapefruit. The flesh of this fruit was known to ancient practitioners of medicine as containing remedial properties to combat infections and toxæmia in humans and animals. Both Pliny the Elder and Theophrastus mentioned it in their writings in glowing terms, but they were not the first to do so. Ancient scientists long before them already knew that the seeds of grapefruit did not decay in compost, but also protected vegetable matter



close by from decaying.

Since then very little has been done to uncover the chemical properties responsible for such anti-decaying action. Now, however, the Pasteur Institute in Paris and a number of universities around the world have undertaken much-belated research into those properties. Most success in this endeavour has so far been achieved by Florida University (USA) where professor James Cedra and Dr Jacob Harich have isolated the chemical elements responsible for combating decay in living cells. Their research has indicated that those elements can not only restrict the growth of a variety of cancers and harmful neoplasms in living cells, but also eliminate them. One of the chemicals isolated was subsequently named glutation, the other pectine. This discovery led to the manufacture of the extract of both of those chemicals, which has been named citrosept and has shown very promising results in combating various forms of cancer.

CAUSES

But what causes the cancer in the first place? One cannot help feeling that perhaps the new approach to life, work and eating in the last few decades is causing a great deal of mental and physical stress, resulting in the increasing incidence of insomnia, eating disorders, migraine and nervous disorders.

Until now, after the abandonment of grandmother's herbal remedies, these disorders have been treated in most industrial countries with nonorganic sedatives and tranquillisers, resulting often in addiction. Now many scientists believe that it was a mistake to abandon the old remedies for the sake of progress and that they should be resurrected from obscurity to combat bacteria and viruses, which are increasingly becoming immune to the 'modern wonder drugs' like penicillin, streptomycin and others.

The old herbal remedies can be easily grown in one's garden, as our grandmothers used to do when life was simpler and less complicated than it is now. Among the old medications are herbal sedatives such as passionflowers, valerian, hops and skullcap, to mention a few.

It is clear now that our lifestyle, our environment and our work can influence our health and wellbeing. The importance of those influences on our life emerges clearly from the message expressed by the 1991 Nobel Prize winners, Dr E Neher and Dr B Sakmann, who said: 'We have to be more balanced in our approach to life and eating.' Other scientists advocate that we have to avoid a diet consisting of soft drinks, breadless breads, imitation foods, artificial colouring, synthetic foods and products laden with potentially harmful chemicals. Can we ignore them any longer?



PARKINSON'S DISEASE & HOME PESTICIDE EXPOSURE

An American study in San Diego has linked those with exposure to pesticides in the home as having a significantly higher risk of being diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. Though no specific pesticides were implicated, they are known to be neurotoxins capable of affecting central nervous system function.

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HOT STUFF

Roberino's Chilli Sauce

by Roberino, Arrawarra Beach, NSW.

If you are resourceful and have access to the ingredients, you can't ignore a homemade chilli sauce. You can tailor it to exactly your preferences for other spices, degree of sweetness etc. I vary my sauce from time to time using a base chilli purée which is simply a kilogram of chillies blended, stewed for one hour on a conventional stove or half an hour on high in a microwave (keep checking).

Don't use metal spoons for stirring or metal pots for cooking as they really spoil the taste. I think the acid in the chillies reacts with the metal.

CHILLI PURÉES

Mild

Wear gloves! Don't touch eyes or other sensitive areas!

Remove all seeds and soft inside tissue, as these are the hot parts. Toast the skin side of the chilli strips until they blacken slightly and plunge them into iced water. Peel off the skins. This is the Mexican method and somehow imparts a nutty flavour to the flesh. Blend the flesh in an electric blender with some water and any other spices or flavours you like - garlic, cumin, ginger, apples etc - it's really limitless. Cook as above. Use a small blender for small amounts.

Medium to Hot

Same as mild, but add as many seeds as you're game to, or desire.

Chunky

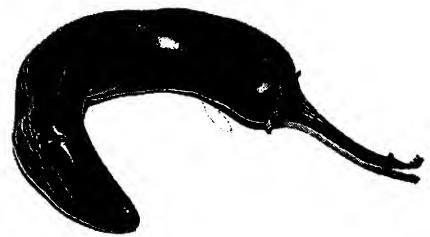
Don't blend for very long, or if doing a small amount just cut up by hand. Don't rub your eyes! Wear gloves!

Sweetness

I use honey of the flavour I prefer (apple) and blend it in with a spoon while the purée is still warm as it mixes readily. Equal amounts of honey and purée work fine, but suit your taste.

STORAGE

I've stored chilli peppers in the freezer for up to four years with no bad effects.



I usually buy a large amount at the markets for \$2/kg and bung 'em in the freezer. Purée and honey keep quite well in a fridge, the sugar in the honey being a good preservative.

I use an ice block tray for keeping handy sized chilli purée quickly accessible for bunging into a really boring meal to give it a 'tang', but if anyone's got kids I don't think it's a good idea as they can easily be mistaken for strawberry ice blocks, with disastrous results! If people have a freezer that is genuinely childproof it could be OK.

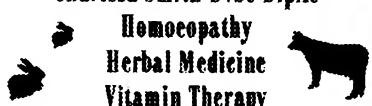


ANTIDOTES

If you overdo the hot bit in a meal, add coconut milk, sugar, cream, sour cream, or milk. Drink lots of milk if you overdose.

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GORGEOUS BUNNY SOCKS

by Heather Kozak, Delliknora, Vic.

On one of my many scavenges through the local (38 kilometres away) op shop I found a pair of child's socks that were quite charming. A rabbit face of eyes, nose and whiskers was embroidered on the front, with a pair of long ears poking up from the leg band above and a small white cotton tail sewn on at the back of the leg band. My daughter Karla was delighted with the fantasy footwear and loved hopping about like a bunny to make the pom-pom tails bob.

They are deceptively easy to make; all you need are a plain pair of socks, wool or embroidery cotton and some material scraps (preferably felt). I've made the pom-pom tail the old-fashioned way by winding wool around two cardboard 'doughnuts', cutting along the outer edge and tying the centre tightly before removing the cardboard. When I haven't had a spare 42 hours to do this, I've resorted to buying a packet of tiny white rabbit tails from a craft supply shop. In fact, I'm still using the packet of twenty-four pom-poms now!

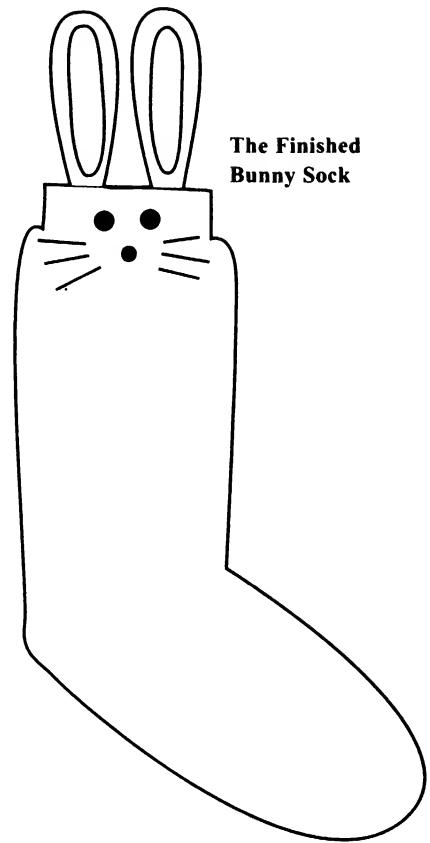
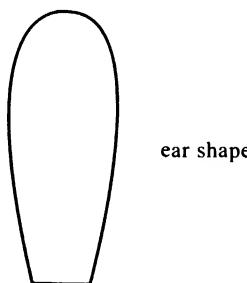
HOW TO

Slide one sock onto a jar or cardboard cylinder (this gives you a firm base and prevents the front of the sock accidentally being sewn to the back). Using satin stitch, french knots or plain old ham-fisted cobbling, embroider two eyes about 1.5 centimetres below the top of the sock front. Add a nose and some long-stitch whiskers below the eyes. Turn the back of the sock toward you and sew on the tail at the same level as the eyes.

Cut out four ear shapes three to five centimetres long, place one piece on top of another and sew together around the edges so the ear is double thickness – blanket or glove stitch, or even in-and-out dotted line stitch. This reinforces the ear and makes it stand up

instead of flopping over. If you used stiff material like leather or vinyl the doubling would not be needed. Sew a smaller piece of pink felt to the front of the ear if you feel like it, then stitch the ears to the inside of the leg band above the eyes. Ta-da! Easter bunny socks. The same design works on the backs of gloves and mittens as well.

These are simple enough for kids to try their hands at creating. I use white socks with white ears and tails, but a 'real' coloured rabbit could be made out of fawn footwear and grey felt. Try filling the socks with tiny chocolate eggs and hanging them up for Easter morning. They make as much impression as Christmas stockings do with my brood.



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INADVERTENT AGRICULTURE

by Pam Cole, Tuncurry, NSW.

ou probably know the kind of plant I mean – it grows, and goodness knows why. Chucked-out potato peelings, small spuds dropped while digging, bits of this and that. You agonise over the problem pages in your favourite gardening book, add special fertilisers and devoted care, and the plant you want to grow just won't . . . meanwhile some accidental green thing is laughing its head off as you sweat and struggle.

For instance, the parsley growing in the centre of the brick-paved verandah. Now, we planted parsley around the first vegie bed. No go. We put it next year in its own section of the herb garden. Okay for a while, but eventually it dwindled and died. Full of notions of companion planting, we tried it beneath each rose bush. Worked quite well, but one hot summer it ran madly to seed and fizzled out. The old tales of 'T'will thrive only if stolen' and 'Parsley seed must go six times to the devil and back before t'will grow,' were beginning to make sense! At least, I'd mentally consigned it to the devil in my barely audible mutterings as I pulled out the remains of yet another failed parsley plant!

But in the one spot on our front verandah where water drips through on wet days, some blown seed must have lodged, for there a large bush of parsley has made its home. It's prolific and very useful. 'Oh, hi, I'm just popping round the verandah to get some parsley,' is a frequent weekend cry, as neighbours home-in across our lawn with the Sunday roast or tabbouleh in mind.

Farming friends from the Snowy brought us a few bucket loads of a delicious golden-green apple, itself of unknown origin. The cores and peelings were composted, but one seed escaped and a treelet grew. Of course it shouldn't live in our humid climate, but it survived transplanting to the orchard, and is now waist-high. It may produce fruit, maybe not, but it's fun to watch its growth and dream, and per-

haps the little bits of other apple trees grafted on to two of its branches will do something anyway.

Something else accidental is the big shady grove of cootamundra wattles. A golden picture at flowering time, excellent shelter for tiny regenerated native plants, and a good shady resting place, these three trees just popped up when we spread some accumulated grass clippings and leaves as mulch over an area of lawn seed.

Creeping up a back wall, regardless of the overhanging verandah roof, is a flourishing native creeper, kennedia. The ones we planted died. This one's seed apparently lay low during all the building activity and made up its own mind to come up through the paving and grow itself right there. It has a mate out in the backyard, which has kindly decided to clothe the remains of a storm-wrecked old tree. It decorates the ruins nicely with twining tendrils and dark red blooms, and has earned our gratitude.

Last of all is the amazing sweet potato plantation. This started as a piece of sweet potato skin with 'eyes' on it, peeled when cooking Christmas dinner one year, set in a saucer of water to see what would happen, as one does with carrot tops, and tossed out when we lost interest. A plant and tubers grew (delicious), and three years later this has developed under its own steam into something worthy of a South American jungle. You can fill a wheelbarrow with its sweet potatoes at harvest time!

Lest the gods of gardening send punishment for such boastful descriptions of accidental bounty, let me hasten to inform you that all this has been balanced very nicely thank you by deaths and disasters aplenty in our intentional gardening section. We've had quite enough total failures, despite strenuous efforts, in growing desired plants, so we are only too aware of the horticultural irony of our success in the field of accidental and inadvertent plantsmanship!



This parsley plant gone to seed has not only grown huge, almost taking over the whole garden bed, but will spread its seeds far and wide – often germinating in the most unlikely places. Ironically, gently nurtured seeds of the same plant will sometimes fail to thrive.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Let your hook be always cast; in the pool where you least expect it, there will be a fish.

★ ★ Ovid

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NUTRITION BY STEALTH

Good Food For Kids

by Marie Podger, Richmond, NSW.

In a previous article (GR 130, 'Cool Baby') I wrote about some of the ways we can take care of our little ones without the use of harsh, expensive and unnecessary products. Now I'd like to pass on some ideas about the care of those same little bundles of joy as they begin to grow and find their feet in the big wide world. We begin with one of my favorite subjects, *food!*

All parents know that children don't always share our enthusiasm for healthy food and sometimes harbour deep suspicion of anything green, so life at mealtimes can become challenging. Make the most of the chance to control what your young children are eating – before they reach the age of rampant consumerism and peer pressure! Ideally, our kids will learn that there are some things we need to do for the good of our health whether we like it or not, and even come to appreciate healthy food for the taste alone. Until then, there are ways of supplying nutrients without them even noticing.

My favourite way of playing 'Eat Your Greens' is by providing the child with their own patch of garden. Most kids love a bit of dirt and are interested in watching things grow. Let them 'help' by digging in their patch and scattering seeds themselves. (Later, when they are sleeping, you may need to creep out and plant more seeds, or even seedlings, in a more practical fashion, but it's a start!) We plant things that grow quickly and reasonably easily, such as mixed lettuce, tatsoi and other mild Asian greens, spinach, parsley, Sweet Bite tomatoes, snow peas, broccoli and beans. The child is taught that this garden alone is theirs to 'graze' at will. You must ensure that they understand that some other plants are not safe to eat, but their special garden is fine. In this way many kids who hate greens will manage to swallow a lot of the freshest possible nutrients while learning where food

really comes from! Come to think of it, I probably get most of my greens the same way.*

You can also purée vegetables so that they are unrecognisable, and make them into patties. Ingredients such as well-cooked chickpeas, lentils or soybeans can be added for extra protein, along with mashed tofu, leftover chicken or tinned fish if desired. An egg and/or leftover cooked rice can be useful as a binder. Roll in crumbs/wheat-germ/whatever's handy, and bake until crispy. These can be eaten alone, or in a bun as a burger with all the trimmings for older kids. The mixture can be rolled into balls and deep-fried occasionally for variety. You can enclose a little chunk of cheese in the middle before cooking, but make sure it's not molten when served! Rolled into sausage shapes, coated in seasoned breadcrumbs and lightly sprayed with oil they can be grilled like fish fingers.

If a child really hates the *taste* of the veg, as opposed to the *idea*, be careful with your attempts in the art of disguise; you don't want to put them off something they like by associating it too obviously with something they loathe.

Dips can be based on puréed pulses and vegetables too, with yoghurt, ricotta or cottage cheese added for a creamier texture and flavour, and a little garlic or spices as desired. Hummus, tzatziki, guacamole, even hot-pink Turkish style beetroot dip are kid-friendly and healthy. Children love dipping bits of toasted pita bread, raw veggies and, well, *fingers* into all of these foods. They will often even go for creamy mashed potato/sweet potato served like this, especially with a bit of grated cheese melted into it, milk or yoghurt to thin it and herbs, garlic etc for flavour. Which reminds me that when I was a child for years my Gran served us a startling orange mash she called 'Tasmanian potato'. We thought



that sounded pretty exotic and ate it readily, but would never have touched it had she called it 'mashed spuds, pumpkin, carrot and onion,' which it was, years later, revealed to have been! Food for thought!

You can be really creative and make the food into little faces or flowers or traffic lights, or an entire impressionist landscape on the plate, if it helps and you have the patience. This method met with howls of derision in our house, but apparently works for some.

Toddlers easily develop food fetishes, especially if exposed to overseasoned commercially available foods in a moment of parental madness, or – dare I say it – grandparently indulgence. Our Ben would happily have eaten three-minute noodles for breakfast lunch and tea, given the chance, and one of his little mates had a serious fish-finger habit. We chose to gradually wean him off the noodles by buying plain rice noodles, cooking them in a flavoursome natural stock, and convincing him they came out of a garish plastic packet. We served them with a handful of raw greens and made sure he ate a variety of healthy tucker at other meals. By not making too big a

deal of it, we let him lose interest. Had we indulged in running battles each night, the power struggles could have gone on indefinitely!

Fortified foods such as high-protein, vitamin-added pasta are available for 'b'scetti' fans who temporarily won't touch anything else. As well, favourites such as tortellini and ravioli (known in our house as 'parcel pasta'), kid-sized filo pastry triangles, and mini pies and quiches cooked in muffin tins can contain a wide range of fillings such as pumpkin and other vegies, ricotta, cheese sauce, chicken, herbs... Be creative! They'll yum them up and think *they're* putting one over you.

Foods refused should be offered again in a day or two, as children often have an intrinsic distrust of the unfamiliar but will try it without fuss when they come to recognise it and see you enjoying it. Our rule was to try at least a little of each food offered, even if only a spoonful, and to aim for as much variety as possible. Remember, the world will not end if your child eats banana porridge for dinner instead of breakfast or wants tomato sauce on everything!

Fruit, being sweet, is a much easier prospect. Offer it often, as fresh and perfectly ripe as possible, either in chunks or simply prepared as a smoothie, ice block, jelly, purée or diluted juice.

We are lucky to live in an apple growing district and find that crisp seasonal apples straight from the tree readily win over non-fruit-eaters (adults as well as kids!) who have only ever tasted bland, floury, cold-stored supermarket varieties. This is especially true if they can pick them themselves. Often orchards sell, very cheaply, perfectly good apples that are too small or odd-shaped for the supermarket, but perfectly kid-sized! Also, organise excursions to organic orchards and farms to allow kids to learn about food sources first-hand. Our playgroup visited a blueberry farm and came away with their tummies much more full than their buckets! There was the added bonus of birds, frogs, lizards and an abundance of mud to discover among the bushes.

**Even organically grown vegies must be washed before eating, as the surface, especially of lettuce and other crops that grow*

close to the ground, can contain harmful bacteria from the soil. Other diseases can be transmitted by gastropods that might crawl over your crop. However, this need not stop kids from 'grazing'; just teach them to pick, wash, eat, and treat the 'wash' aspect as water play. - ed.

Next time I'll discuss raising children as vegetarians.

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MAKING IT WORK TOGETHER

by Jill Fraser, Red Hill, Vic.

Some time ago I read a letter from a reader asking if anyone had had to deal with a partner who is a city slicker while they are 'country'. I have a story to tell.

When I was eleven, on a Sunday drive down the Wanganui River in NZ, and feeling the terrible onset of carsickness as my father hurtled his old Ford around the bends, I dreamt of leaving home and living on my own farm. To keep my mind off the rising feeling of sickness I would set up my farm in my mind. I would have sheep for wool, cows for milk, and grow lots of vegetables. I would wonder if I could ever kill something to eat. I would design my farmhouse, which would sit over there on that green paddock across the river. The farmers at this spot could only access their proper-

ties by huge flying foxes over the river or by punt. I thought that was fun. However, practical matters such as how I was going to purchase this property never arose. Carsickness intervened at this point. 'It's all in the mind,' my father would mutter to my mother as he screeched the car to a halt.

When I left home at eighteen I grew vegetables in a small garden behind my flat. Later, in a rented house, I grew a garden on permaculture lines without knowing it. It was the seventies. We were all into health food, cutting down pollution, using Sunlight soap on our dishes, going to Theosophical Society meetings, and planning on sending our children to Rudolf Steiner schools. The garden was composted and built on top of the red volcanic rock that was in my area. Soon I was living in the big

smoke. I had a job as a commercial artist. I met my husband, a medical rep.

Twenty years later one is city, the other is still country. What happens when such an ill-matched couple buy a farm? Heaps, I can tell you. You have one partner who sees challenges everywhere and loves spending time thinking about how to go about overcoming them, and one partner who shudders at recycling, Country and Western music, manure and compost, gets depressed looking at old flat fences, and hates mess and untidiness. Life gets tough.

Our first purchase was a five-acre block. Room for two cows, eight sheep, one goat, two cats and one dog. The farmhouse was so rundown hubby wouldn't move from his air-conditioned, centrally heated city dwelling until I had done something about it. I



What is a dream come true for one partner can be a nightmare for the other half. Husband Roger overcome by the signs of the task ahead.

spent the first night there on my own, rugged up in front of a small Wonderheat woodburner, looking at the large hole over the door that cold winter air was whistling through, and giggling inanely at all the unstraight lines I could see in the lounge. The ceilings swooped and rose; the mantelpiece – running across the room, over two bookcases and the fireplace in the centre – looked like two eyebrows that meet in the middle. The floor, while not creaking, did not look even. It wasn't. The carpet in the lounge and dining rooms was a brown, orange and black patterned job that the dog pooped on three times before I tracked down the smell. It had to go. But while I sat there on that first night, I could see that this little farmhouse, built in the Depression, had character and all it needed was a bit of carpentry and paint and wallpaper. The grounds were full of established trees and shrubs; the large vegetable garden all fenced. While the condition of the house was questionable it was easy to see the previous owner had loved his vegetable garden. But what a tidy garden! Neat little raised beds looked like a family plot in a cemetery, not a weed in sight. What scope for me.

A year down the track the house was pulled pushed and prodded into shape like a matron being laced into a corset, and was looking more like my urban mate's tidy, clean, neat style. It did protest. While the floors were now even, they creaked dreadfully. The garden, full of lush growth, and weeds, with irregular patches and clumps of hazelnut bushes, rhubarb, and lots of berry bushes was looking more like me.

At this point I must say that my husband and I are linked together by more

than sex, family and entangled financial webs. This is a couple who had an argument filling out their applications to get married forms at the Registry Office. Over our married life I have started up businesses with or without my husband's support. However, I have been there for him when there have been difficult career decisions to be made. I moved to another country when he was offered promotion with relocation, selling up my business and cutting my interests short. Now, this time in our lives was my time. It was time for the dream I had dreamed as an eleven year old. My husband, bless his light wool English socks, was prepared to rough it to provide it for me. However, the cost, not in money, but in patience, strength of mind and perseverance (both of ours) was high.

A walk around the property to show off my new calf, how the goat had grown, or the lovely grove of peppermint gums in the bottom paddock usually ended with hubby being totally depressed and grumpy. He ignored the dear little sundews and miniature wild orchids, the sunlight filtering through the trees. He grumbled at the untidy fences, the ferns, the bark and leaves dropped from the gum trees. I would stomp back to the house, working out various ways I could keep the farm but get rid of the liability.

With daylight saving in summer he worked longer in the office. When there was a very special sunset I would take the dog for a walk on a nearby beach. I would wish hubby would come home in time to see it. It seemed it was only me who appreciated sitting in the middle of my lush garden full of healthy vegies and weeds and flowers.

My three rubbish bins for recycling – glass, compost and the nasty one for foil and plastics – only worked when hubby was away on a work trip. He would deliberately tip compost material into any one he fancied. All the farm work was my responsibility. Fair enough. It was my dream. I planted, raked, cleared paddocks, unblocked gutters, put up electric fences and worried about the water levels in the tanks. I fed kookaburras by hand. Their strong beaks delicately taking meat out of my fingers that suddenly looked quite tender and delicious, and very vulnerable. I watched sunsets. I took

the dog out early for a walk to see the sunrises. I bought and sold animals, dealt with pink eye, messy bums, ringworm, torn ears, a dog-mangled goat, drenching and shearing.

There was this man in the background going to work at seven in the morning and coming home at eight at night. He liked cooking in the large kitchen. He loved his cozy bedroom. He was happy when friends came from the city for a country Sunday lunch in our large sunny kitchen. He would show off the kookaburras, the green paddocks, and the huge vegetable garden – always saying, 'Don't look at the weeds'. When we put a cellar under the house for his wine he started to thaw a little. He was pleasantly surprised when my blackcurrant wine developed into a very nice dry red (without preservatives), but had difficulty articulating it positively. It just wasn't his scene. He missed his jazz, the nightclubs, and the ease of going to a play or a show. He sighed when he had to get up at three in the morning to catch the early flight to Sydney. I was beginning to despair. It wasn't half as much fun being the only one having fun.

The thought of living back in the city, leaving behind my cows, sheep, goats and garden was hard. I thought I would no longer cope well with the pollution in the air, the noise of traffic and neighbours living. Our relationship faltered. The garden and the flowers and animals were all growing, but our marriage was approaching winter. One day I left. The night before departing I went out and looked over the paddocks, said goodbye to the animals and went inside without looking at my garden. I stayed with a girlfriend in a nearby town while I thought about my future.

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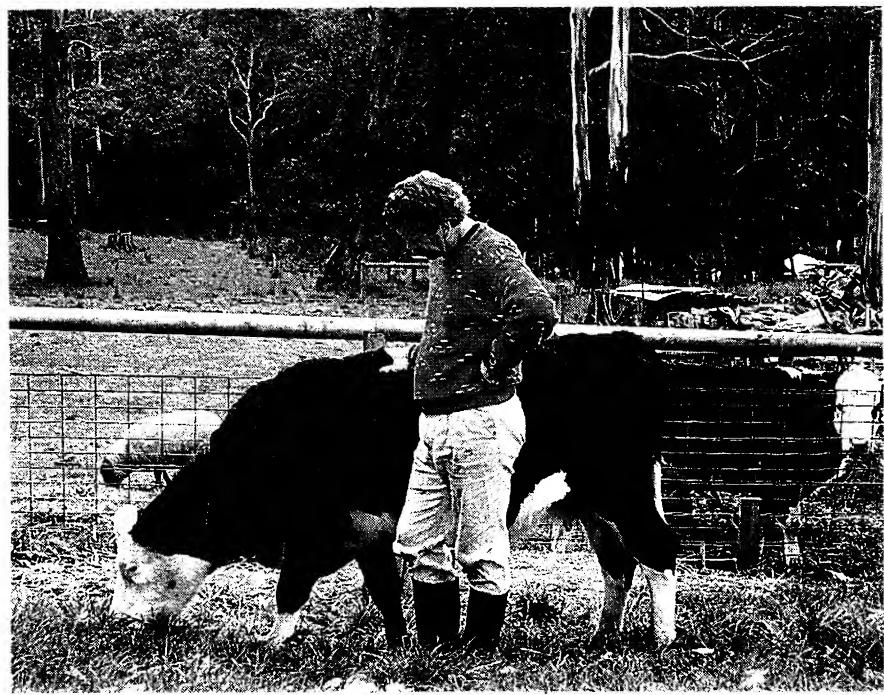
PERHAPS YOU HAVE A STORY TO TELL!

13 TANNABAR PLACE ISABELLA PLAINS 2905

I lived in a small two-bedroom house with the dog. I didn't have the heart to grow any vegetables. I bought them from the supermarket near where I worked. I worked from nine to six, went home, ate and watched TV. The dog and I both pined for our country walks. We walked along pavements past sleeping people's houses, to see the sunrises. For a moment at dusk, the evening sun would shine into my living room and then it was gone, blocked out by the houses across the street. Left on his own, my husband went through his own bad patch. He had to weed the gardens, feed the animals, mow the lawns, pick up leaves and sweep the long drive. In his weekends he started to build up bigger gardens. He developed an interest in old-fashioned roses and country gardens. He bonded with the cows and calves.

While my husband was away on business trips I went back to the farm to look after the animals. He was using his gardening as therapy and it seemed to be working. One weekend he took me to a garden supplier he had found. They stocked all his favorite old-style roses. I felt like a visitor from the city, curiously detached. I was getting used to living close to work. Three minutes and I was there. I started thinking about offering to buy the house I rented. I knew the landlord wanted to sell. My husband started to ask me out on dates, to see his new car, or partner him to a work function. Then one day he casually suggested we go on an overseas trip we had booked many months earlier. It would give us one more chance he said. We went.

After driving and arguing our way around foreign parts we rediscovered whatever it was that had held us



Husband Roger took time to tune into country life – cattle numbers have grown from two to over fifty!

together. It was the being together. We resolved to fix things up when we went home. Over the next few years we did that. We learnt bridge. He came home earlier. We took the dogs (now two) for walks on the beach. We sat down and dealt with what he didn't like about our five acres. We went out and bought a bigger farm with no messy gum trees in the paddocks. They were in shelter-belts and along the creekline, where they belonged! Good fences, a tractor to play on, more cows, less sheep, room for a big flower garden, a house on top of a hill, sea views. I had to rebuild a vegetable garden out of nothing. A very small price to pay for a happy man I thought. He loves the time he can get making neat garden beds, chopping up all the untidy wood lying around, clearing forty years of accumulated rubbish out of the sheds. I have two sheep for wool, fifty-odd head of cattle, two cows for milk, four hens for eggs, a herb garden, a vegetable patch, a berry patch, and room for an orchard. There are two dogs, two cats, kookaburras, little wrens and Australian robins in the garden. Several large bluetongue lizards live nearby. Kangaroos make nests in my hay paddocks.

My 'urban' husband had me driving the tractor while he sprayed for black-

berries on Boxing Day last year, temperatures in the high 30s. I guess the country just took a while to click with him. He goes back to work reluctantly after the Christmas break, having worked me like a navvy to get all the 'together' chores done.

We sit on the deck in summer and sip our cool drinks and watch the sunset blaze across the sky above the sea. We both deal with ragwort, pink eye, blackberries and foxes. We still argue about how to do things and yell ferociously at each other when we are shifting the bull around. We both moan a little if we get invited into the city for dinner or a show. We go – together – lessons learnt.

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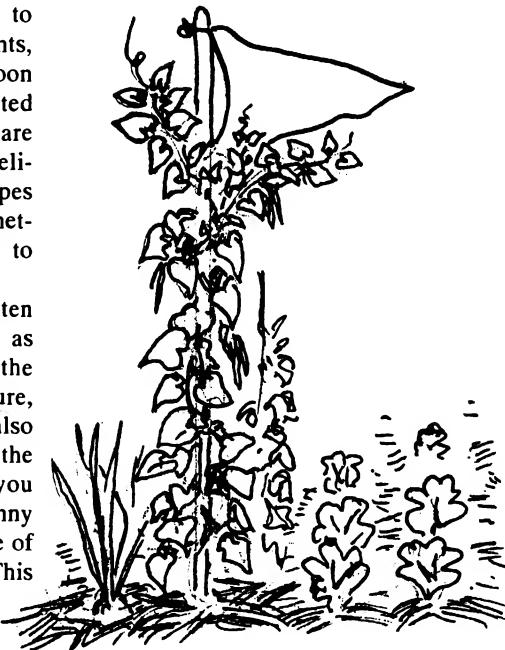
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GARDENER, SPARE THIS PLANT!

by Robert Millet, Kalgoorlie, WA.

Sooner or later those of us who plant gardens will arrive at the decision to save the seeds of our favourite plants, and then all of them, because we soon learn that heirloom or open-pollinated types perform well, reproduce true, are cheaper, chemical free, and more reliable than store-bought hybrid types coated with poisons. Seed saver networks have books and techniques to help beginners.

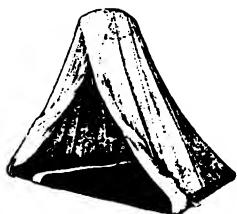
Quite a few food plants are eaten when the plant is immature, such as radish, zucchini, carrot. To get the seeds we have to let the plant mature, and that means waiting longer, and also allowing for a much larger plant in the garden bed. How often have you cleared a bed in a moment of sunny enthusiasm only to discover that one of the plants was your seed source? This tip will help you save those seeds.



I notice which plant (or fruit) has given extra yields, is bug free, shows early (or late) flowering tendencies, or whatever characteristic I am looking for to indicate genetics worth saving. Once located, I put a tall stake in the ground next to it. Now that's not unusual, but what's on the stake is. At the top I tie a bright red flag. Depending how long the stake is (the mature height of the plant), I attach bits of electrical wire or velcro along its length to help hold the plant to the stake. One radish plant last year required two star pickets about two metres long!

Now when I go to a garden bed and see a bright bit of cloth waving 'hello, I'm busy,' I know next year's seeds are being made at very low cost, and I know also to not rip the plant out until those seeds are dry and in the bag.

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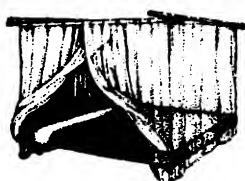
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Fencing With A Forked Stick

by Norman Ross, Peak Hill, NSW.

Having read GR for many years, I would like to make some contribution to this great magazine. This method of fencing was used on Victoria River Downs cattle station in the Northern Territory. I worked there in the early 1960s as a fencer, using the forked stick for straining both barbed and plain wire. This type of fencing was used only for cattle, which were fairly wild. There were also wild donkeys and brumbies, plus the usual native animals of that area. All the fences there seemed to stand up okay to these animals. I worked there from April to December, after this the country becomes too wet to move anywhere, the best way being by aeroplane.

TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT

Before explaining the forked stick method of wire straining I will give you a list of tools required, and their uses.

Gloves

These are very important for hand protection.

Steel Plug

This can be made from a 25 x 15 mm hexagon bolt or similar with the thread end shaped to a narrow point. It's used for holding wire in place (see below).

Hammer

This will be used for hitting the steel plug into the post where the wire comes through the already drilled hole. You will find this holds the wire in place.

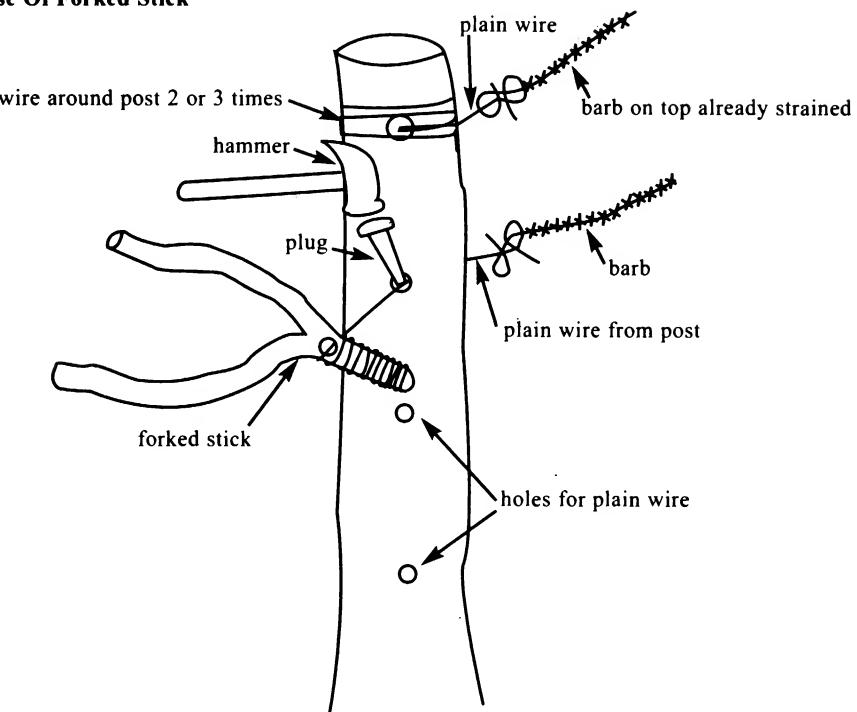
Brace and Bit or Wood Auger

This is used for drilling the holes through posts for the plain wire to go through.

Spinning Jenny

For placing the plain wire on. This is used to prevent the plain wire being tangled and is placed at the first strainer post. The wire is then threaded through posts to the strainer post you will use to strain the wire. A rural supply centre would be very helpful on the type of 'jenny' and its use. There are homemade types and others you can buy, some known by other names, especially if they don't work too well!

Use Of Forked Stick



Water Pipe

About half a metre would do, or it can be longer, whatever you feel comfortable with. No it's not for chasing your mate with if things go wrong, it's for putting through the reel of barbed wire which is tied to the first strainer post. Your mate then takes one end of the pipe, you hold the other and walk to the next strainer post where the wire is to be strained. The top barbed wire is always the first to be strained, then other wires just below, and so on, until the last wire to do is the bottom wire. This way they won't get caught on each other.

Forked Stick

This can be made from any strong timber. Mine is made from a crepe myrtle tree - I made it 20 years ago. The handles of the fork are 70 cm long and 22 cm around. The handles are 60 cm apart at the ends. The trunk part where the fork begins is 25 cm around and 20 cm long and has a 15 mm hole drilled 14 cm from the end. The one I used previously was from a coolabah tree.

METHOD

Having given you the list of tools needed and their uses, I will describe the type of fence and how it's built, plus a few tips. Most of the timber for the posts was bloodwood with some coolabah. These are called strainers and used to strain the wire. The other posts were steel star pickets. All the posts were six metres apart, or near to this as all distances were stepped out.

The pickets are put in first, driven in with a picket driver. The first one was the furthest from two sight pegs which can be anywhere in the direction the fenceline is going except for where you have the posts that are ready to go in. The furthest sighting peg should have white material wrapped tightly around it to make it easier to sight the pickets. Remember, the first picket to go in the ground is the furthest from the sight pegs and never use the posts just put in to sight with as you could have problems.

To make a panel of this fence you use ten star pickets and two strainer

posts. The star pickets, if you have a good driver, will be far enough in the ground when the end of the driver touches the ground. Make sure all the pickets face the same way. The strainer posts are a metre or more in the ground and slightly higher than the pickets. If you intend to build more than one panel, one stay is necessary for the first strainer only as you will be repeating the same procedure on the next panel but only using one strainer, and so on. Once all the posts are up, next comes the barbed wire which is always put on first at the top of the post. When straining the top barb, which is always strained first, it should lift off the ground about 76 cm between the 5th and 6th pickets. You can lift the wire up from its lowest point then tie off, placing the wire in the slot at the top of the pickets as you go, then strain the next barbed wire, which should lift to about half the distance of the top wire. The two plain wires were usually high enough for very young calves to get back to their mothers, as they did get through the fence at times.

I always lifted the wire onto the pickets with pliers and wore gloves. Using the forked stick you will need a piece of plain wire a metre or more long to join on to the barbed wire. First put the piece of plain wire through the top hole in the post as the top wire should always be strained first. When the wire is through the post, bend it sharply to prevent it slipping back out. Then go around the other side of the post and remove some of the barbs on the end of the barbed wire, making a figure-8 tie. On an 18-metre panel of fencing the barb should have a bow in it between the strainer posts, at the lowest point about 76 cm off the ground. Until you're used to fencing this way, even less strain on the wire for a few practice runs is better.

2,4-D, DIOXIN AND CANCER

The United States Government has finally acknowledged that dioxin is a human carcinogen and toxicologists admit that 2,4-D contains dioxin. Unfortunately, ANZFA is considering legalising a ten-fold increase in the allowable levels of 2,4-D in wheat. Just make sure you stick to organic.

Acne Alleviation

by John Mount, Woodford, Qld.

A while ago, when talking to the teenage son of a neighbour, I couldn't help noticing the lad was badly afflicted by acne. I could also see that he was self-conscious about it. To try and put his mind at ease I told him how, when I was his age, I too was so heavily affected that on one occasion I resorted to band-aids in an attempt to hide the problem. 'Yeah, zits are the pits,' he agreed, gently kicking the fence post, 'I've tried just about everything. Dad says I eat too much junk food.'

Like my neighbour's son I found that chocolates and sweets consumed at the Saturday matinee would invariably produce (or exacerbate) an ugly crop of pimples or zits ready to be taken to school on Monday. Medical science in those days rarely discussed diet or the effects of incorrect eating in relation to acne or skin disorders, preferring instead to prescribe creams or lotions, and often recommending a horrendous scrubbing session with a stiff brush during bathing. I'm not sure if the stiff scrubbing brush Mum used could ever remove blackheads, or whiteheads, but the skin itself? Most definitely!

During the dating period, acne became a major problem and various methods of concealment were considered and tried by the hapless teen. The forced manual removal of zits usually resulted in a red, bruised, and blotchy face which, like a billboard, told the

whole world exactly what you had done. Some males, braver than others, resorted to 'borrowing' their mother's or sister's make-up in often vain attempts to hide the ravages of the affliction, usually with results ranging from effeminate, to the other extreme of looking like a circus clown!

Acne, according to modern medicine, is a chronic skin disorder, which manifests itself as an inflammation of the oily sebaceous glands of the skin. Though linked mainly to the fluctuations of the hormones during puberty, it sometimes occurs during mid-life, or, on rare occasions, as a side-effect during the taking of some types of medication. The elimination or reduction of fats and sweets in the diet and the consumption of fruits and vegetables, as well as frequent exercise is considered the best treatment for unhealthy skin. (Old Chinese saying: 'He who walks 99 steps after every meal will live to be 100.') Unfortunately, fruit and vegies have never been considered trendy by teenagers.

There are many natural herbs that will purify the blood and aid in the treatment of acne and similar skin conditions, but the best treatment I've found for pimples and acne is the daily rubbing of the face with raw garlic or onion. This causes each pimple to dry out and crumble away, leaving the skin as healthy and smooth as a baby's.

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Animal Diseases Affecting Humans

by Karen Nicoll, Hamilton, NZ.

One of the hazards of dealing with animals is that they sometimes carry infections that can cause disease in humans. Sometimes the animal itself may be ill and show noticeable symptoms of clinical illness, while at other times the animal may be a carrier and show no outward symptoms of anything wrong.

Traditionally, the most serious types of 'zoonoses' (diseases of animals that can infect people) were tuberculosis, brucellosis, leptospirosis, and hydatids. Fortunately, brucellosis in cattle was eradicated from New Zealand several years ago, and both cattle tuberculosis and sheep hydatids have almost been eradicated.

A DNRE spokesman confirmed that brucellosis has also been eradicated in Australia. Cattle tuberculosis is designated as 'free status', meaning it is below a level at which it could quickly reach epidemic level. It has not been found in southern Australia since 1987, but is occasionally found in the Northern Territory. Sheep hydatids is not a major concern, but can occur where paddocks interface with bushland or state forest. Kangaroos are carriers of hydatids, wild dogs eat kangaroos and deposit contaminated droppings on the pasture which the sheep eat. Even one paddock out from the forest, however, incidence of hydatids drops considerably.

While leptospirosis still exists, it is a lot less common now, with most farmers vaccinating their stock against it. Sporadic cases do still occur in humans.

LEPTOSPIROSIS

This is a bacterial disease that can infect many types of animals – cattle, sheep, pigs, deer, dogs, rodents, hedgehogs, and possums. The bacteria localises mainly in the kidney so that infection is normally spread via urine. An infected animal may show no obvious symptoms, but in cattle the infection can occasionally cause abortion. Humans may be infected through con-

tact with infected urine, with the bacteria getting in through cuts in the skin or through the mucous membranes of the eyes or mouth. People particularly at risk are dairy farmers, pig farmers, and those slaughtering stock. The infection in humans can be quite serious with severe fevers and jaundice.

TUBERCULOSIS

This is a bacterial disease that can occur in several species including cattle, deer, pigs, and possums. Fortunately, through strict control and testing, the disease is now very low in incidence. In humans it causes a severe chronic infection in the lungs.

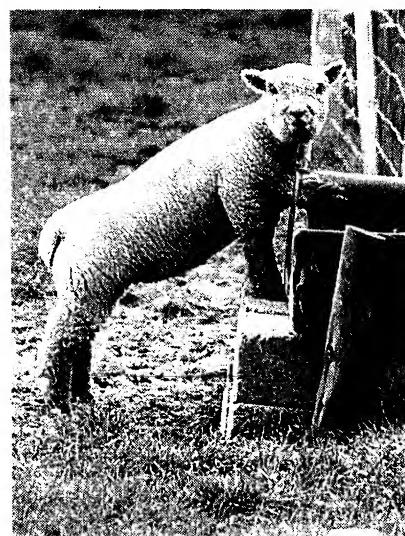
TETANUS

This is a bacterial disease that can cause death through severe generalised muscle spasm. Although not strictly a zoonosis (disease caused by direct animal/human contact), the incidence of tetanus can be indirectly related to contamination of the environment by spores from animals carrying the bacteria.

ORF

(scabby mouth)

This is a viral disease that causes



Young lambs can suffer scabby mouth in the warm months and care must be taken to avoid contracting it.

ulcers and scabs around the mouth and tongue in sheep. The virus can be transferred to humans via cuts or abrasions in the skin and cause a skin infection like an infected boil. The infection in sheep is normally seen in lambs in summer time, so, if mouth lesions are noticed in lambs, care should be taken to avoid handling them around the mouth and possibly transferring the infection.

SALMONELLA/CAMPYLOBACTER

These are both bacteria that can cause enteritis (diarrhoea) in young stock, especially lambs or calves. The main risk to humans is that these organisms can cause serious food poisoning. After handling any animals with symptoms of gastroenteritis or diarrhoea, always wash well, especially before handling any food.

CRYPTOSPORIDIOSIS

This is a coccidia parasite that can cause enteritis in young animals, especially calves. The infection can be transferred to humans where it causes gastroenteritis.

TOXOPLASMOSIS

This is caused by a protozoan parasite that can be carried by young cats. The parasite can cause abortion in sheep, and can cause flu-like symptoms in people. There have been rare cases of toxoplasmosis causing abortion in women. The source of infection is either through contact with raw meat or with cat faeces.

TRICHINOSIS

This is a parasite that can infect muscle tissue and is sometimes found in wild pigs. The parasite can also infect humans if the meat is inadequately cooked (freezing meat will also kill the parasite).

RINGWORM

This is one of the most common zoonoses and is usually seen in children who pick up the fungal skin infec-

tion from puppies or kittens. Ringworm can also occur in cattle, horses, pigs and hedgehogs.

FLEAS, LICE AND TICKS

These insects that live on animals can also briefly make their home on a conveniently available human. Although they won't breed and multiply on humans as they are the wrong host, they can still cause a few itchy bites!

HYDATIDS AND ROUNDWORMS

These can be transferred by contact with faeces from dogs and can cause disease in humans when the larval stage of the intestinal parasite migrate in the body. Fortunately, hydatids is very rare now.

GENERAL RULES FOR PREVENTING ZOOSES

- Cover any cuts or abrasions with waterproof dressings when handling stock.
- Always wear solid footwear (boots/gumboots) when in yards handling stock.
- Wash off any direct contact with animal urine or faeces immediately.
- Avoid direct handling of aborted material.
- After handling animals wash well before eating or drinking.

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SAVING OUR HERITAGE

by Doris Evans, Ringwood East, Vic.

There are groups of people who are concerned about the state of some of our national parks in Victoria. They notice parks that are overrun by noxious weeds which can devastate the natural flora growing there and realise that these foreign plants need to be eradicated before it becomes too late.

Some of these concerned people have formed 'friends' groups. They work in conjunction with and under supervision of the rangers of the particular park and they physically help by digging out these unwanted plants, perhaps fortnightly or monthly. As any gardener knows, it takes consistent work to keep a garden in order, and the same applies to this endeavour in our forests and parks.

These dedicated friends groups are in evidence in many areas of Victoria. For example, there is a group at Maribyrnong River and another at Warrandyte State Park. I know personally a group at Sherbrooke Forest, and another at French Island. There is a group at the Organ Pipes at the Keilor Crater, the first group to begin this salvation work at the Organ Pipes about 25 years ago, another at Kinglake National Park and at the Great Southwest Walk from Portland to the South Australian border. They mostly try to keep these areas free of noxious weeds so that the native flora, and the fauna dependent on it, can survive.

At Sherbrooke there are stands of sycamore trees invading the forest. They are an introduced species and very damaging to the native trees and other flora of the vicinity. Also a problem is the quite attractive montbretia. One of these bulbs can produce at least five other bulbs in only one year, enabling them to overrun much of the natural flora in the forest. The common violet, which many people grow in their gardens, can overcome the gentle wood violet very quickly. Others of concern include wandering jew, holly, ivy, cestrum, pittosporum, onion weed



'Friends' groups have undertaken numerous lyrebird counts.

and even the hydrangea. Many of these unwanted plants have escaped from neighbouring gardens and they easily take hold in the soft fertile soil in the forest. At Kinglake National Park the friends group has taken a lyrebird count recently. Also the Sherbrooke group has completed a lyrebird count. This can take a whole weekend, each participant quietly counting in a certain location for hours, an example of real dedication. At French Island the friends group has taken a koala count; they count the pelicans nests annually, and prepare nesting sites for the fairy terns each year.

All this is invaluable conservation work and the people concerned enjoy it. They feel they are voluntarily working toward the preservation of the forests or parklands in order to leave a pristine heritage to their children and the population of the future so that they also will be able to enjoy the peace and beauty of these areas.

Contact Greening Australia in your state to find out how you can become involved in conservation activities. Your local shire is also a good starting point for what is happening in your area.

WAYS WITH WATER

by Neville Jackson, Valhalla.

Upon our arrival in the Central Queensland Gemfields, we found that rain had bucketed down for the previous week, roads in the area were cut, and that evening we were stopped by a black flood across the track – just 200 metres from our destination, our new abode. Next day we gingerly forded 50 metres of mud to be gleefully told by the now-previous owners that this area was normally in a rain shadow and received little yearly rainfall.

Also, that despite the flood, that year was expected to be a dry one. So, apart from having plenty of renovations to do on the house and gardens, we had to devise a program to catch, store and use wisely every drop, or just go without.

Fortunately, soon after, Queensland Rail renewed all water tanks beside their tracks in the area. The old ones, still sound enough, went to tender. I tendered the princely sum of \$10 each and had the pick of six. I took the lot! Soon every roof sported extra tanks; we even put up additional corrugated iron over courtyards so as to increase our runoff. Then we waited and waited for it to rain.

Shortly after, at an auction nearby, we bid on two swimming pools, easily transportable ones with corrugated metal sides and plastic liners. These we thought would be handy as overflow tanks in case it bucketed down some day. It rarely did.

As I had spent some years in the Western Australian deserts, I recalled some of the methods devised to live without a regular rainfall. One of these was the portable washing machine, otherwise known as a 20-litre plastic drum with large screw lid and a redundant seat belt. Just add clothing and washing powder and cover with water. The drum was seat-belted onto the rear of the tray where it received the roughest ride. Upon arrival in Emerald (two hour drive), the sudsy liquid was drained and replaced with rinse water, courtesy of the shire garden's hose. Once home, the clothes were ready to hang out under



our giant solar clothes drier; the rinse water was passed through a charcoal filter and onto the garden.

At a nearby township, the local shire sold water. This the residents considered the last resort, not just as a sign of personal failure, but because the so-called 'drinking water' was contaminated and only unknowing tourists dared to imbibe – for a short time! The only possible use for this 'moisture' was for the garden. Only tourists bought water to wash their vehicles, the locals waited till it rained.

As the most feasible way to transport water was in 200-litre drums, with an all-up weight over 200 kilograms, this guaranteed a sure-fire back problem. So, with logs and scrap timber I made a roll-on, roll-off drum storage rack. The height of the rack I made just below the tailgate level, with a slight slope down to a log stop. Empty drums were rolled onto the vehicle tray so that the large bung was at the top. When full, they could be easily rolled out onto the rack with the large bung at the bottom (for easy filling and emptying). For convenience, a household tap was screwed hand-tight into the next drum to be used. Timber chocks placed between drums prevented their movement. Drum one was used and emptied

first then number two and so on.

All kitchen and grey water was piped into rubble-drains along raised vegetable beds to finally water essential shrubs and trees. The raised beds were first filled with cut grass, then cow pats, covered with compost and mulched with dry grasses and flattish stones. The stones retained moisture beneath and reflected daytime heat, but kept beds warm during arid-cold nights. Sometimes the rocks attracted dew.

Paths through garden areas were dressed with pebbles to help retain moisture, these tracks were slightly inclined so that any rain runoff passed into the beds.

For quick shade plus food, we grew 'green shadecloth', otherwise known as New Guinea beans. Their speedy growth quickly covered courtyard trellis and arbour. These bean fruits, up to 10 centimetres long, can be eaten like zucchini. Larger than that, forget it! Beans left on will easily exceed 1.5 metres. These were bought by tourists for dried and crafted arrangements, or perhaps as mementoes of their desert safari.

Spare sheets of corrugated iron and cut timber were placed over arbour framework to give extra shade to gardens and courtyards to protect young tender seedlings.

Crops such as potatoes were only grown in winter months in styrene 'hi-risers'. A styrene vegetable box was filled with compost and two seed potatoes. When they grew tops, another box with its bottom removed was placed on the first. Chopped weeds, grasses and more compost buried most of the potato foliage. Stakes were driven in each corner to maintain the boxes in a vertical position. More boxes went on top as required, usually six high resulted in plentiful spuds. It was our teenage son's job when home from boarding school to gleefully push over a full 'hi-rise'.

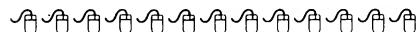
Tomatoes and capsicums were also in styrenes, but were favoured by a grey water pipe from the kitchen sink. The bottom half of each box held charcoal, which supplied nutrients and moisture

to even out the daily heat stress.

Around the perimeters of gardens and courtyard, fairly drought-proof trees such as tagasaste (tree lucerne), bauhinia and cassia were planted to abate hot semidesert winds. To establish, each planting was given a large hole at least a metre deep and wide, crow-barred into very hard ground. The hole base received dry grasses, weeds, cow manure and kitchen compost. Tagasaste trimmings being rich in nitrogen were added as mulch under stones.

On the surface, up slope, a large 'V' was shovelled into the ground with the V apex just uphill of the tree. This V, or chevron, gathered any surface moisture to funnel it to the vegetation so favoured. This is a device used by Israelis in their desert gardens.

All the above took some years to arrange, but resulted in a reasonably efficient level of self-sufficiency, even though one year our total rainfall was only 75 millimetres. Eventually, we had weekend sales to tourists who made our green oasis an essential stop for vegetables, open garden tours with craft, painting and camera opportunities. But we always longed for another flood!



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Gas Fridge Tips

by Dave Perham, Imbil, Qld.

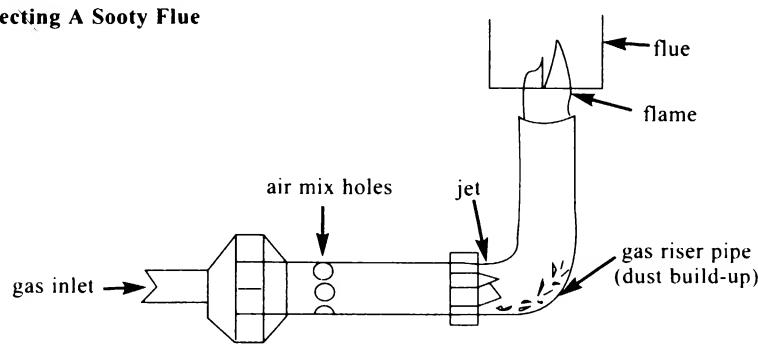
People can become frustrated with gas fridges. At times these contraptions seem bent on redecorating the kitchen in shades of dark grey, freezing everything solid in winter and masquerading as sullen, sweaty cupboards in summer, all the while gurgling, wetting the floor and burping blobs of gooey carbon, while the best the experts can offer is 'clean the flue'! Why does the flue block up? Whatever the model of the fridge or burner the following principles will be similar.

When the fridge flue is sooty and the burner flame yellow the most likely cause is dust and spider web build-up at the air mix holes, the gas jet or in the bend of the gas riser pipe shown in the drawing. As the tiniest piece of debris will affect performance it is essential that these be clear to obtain the correct air/gas mix necessary for a clean blue flame.

Having turned off the LP gas, clean the air mix holes with a cotton bud. If, on relighting, this fails to correct the smoky flue, it may be necessary to remove the brass air mix tube from the gas riser pipe to check the jet and, using a pipe cleaner or similar, the gas riser pipe is cleared of accumulated dust at the bend. A mechanically minded friend could help here as it requires two spanners and a certain amount of care. Do not attempt to separate the jet from its brass holder.

Some gas fridges require the gap between the burner and flue to be set accurately to obtain best air to gas mix. This may be set at around three to five

Correcting A Sooty Flue



millimetres to obtain best blue flame.

As these absorption-type fridges get older they become less efficient due to a combining of cooling mediums. I have been successful in separating these and restoring efficiency by turning the fridge upside down for 24 hours, then returning to upright and leaving for a further 24 hours before reconnecting the gas line and relighting. Of course the LP gas bottle valve must be shut and the line disconnected before upending the fridge.

Another irritation can occur when changing the LP gas bottle or disconnecting the gas pipe, as this may cause an air lock in the system with the burner refusing to light. This usually purges itself with a little time and patience.

Gas fridges rely heavily on the exterior being as cool as possible. I believe it is better to locate them in the coolest, airiest place around the home and not necessarily the most convenient. Remember also to turn the temperature control to the minimum necessary for the seasons as this saves much gas.

I find gas fridges generally good, though they do not recover well from willy nilly opening and closing, or city friends hanging on the open door whilst inspecting the contents. Planning what food will be needed and when is a great help in cooling efficiency. Many of the items brought home from the store and destined for the fridge can be left overnight in a cool cupboard to reduce their temperature and thus the load on the fridge.

Introduction To Pigs

by Phillip Richards, Yandina, Qld.

This short series over the next few issues is about how we keep a few pigs for their meat on our small organic farm, 'Scrubby Bend', outside Childers near Bundaberg. It is a simple how-to, without much technical detail, written to encourage people to have a go and not to get too concerned about scientific management. It is quite easy. If we can do it anyone can.

One thing pigs are not is soft, sweet and cuddly. Well I don't find them so, but I did know someone who would sit in the sty and 'bond' with her pet pigs while feeding them sponge cake. Why didn't she feed the cake to her husband? Perhaps she couldn't tell the difference! Anyway, pigs are a hard, tough cylinder of salami sausage and/or tyre rubber (steel belted) with a bobcat snout at one end and a manure dispenser at the other.

They eat like, er pigs, and have more escapes than Houdini. Early one morning I heard a distress call over the breakfast session on the local ABC: 'One pig age eight to ten weeks missing from Apple Tree Creek. Contact Ron.' 'Hey that's Ron! The Ron we know.' We share trailers, advice, and a pig crate at Christmas time. Bad luck Ron.

We have been keeping a pig or two for company and slow food for the past couple of years. The purpose of this series is to recommend these creatures to the homesteader.

THE WHY

There are advantages for you and for the pig (but don't tell the pig, it won't believe you). For you, there is company and fun, well that depends on you. We draw the line at cake, but more later. They provide the most delicious meat and they fertilise and dig up a plot of ground for you. If you treat the pig well, it will benefit from the association, mainly because you will give it a life of freedom (within bounds), of doing what pigs like - digging stuff up, teasing the cows, running around and lying down where and when they please. If you see a pig running around



Pigs free ranging in a large yard can enjoy life indulging their porcine instincts for digging and teasing cows.

a big yard or living free range and then compare such a life with living in a concrete-floored pen all its life (short though that life is) you would see what an advantage it is to the pig.

One day when we were new here, I went to a nearby farm to get some ducks and saw the farmers' pig. I asked why they kept it and was told that at least they knew just what it had been fed, it did not get dosed with antibiotics routinely and the flesh was much better than the bought stuff. Especially, I was told, better than Canadian pork which they said was very dry and stuck in the pan. So, in a patriotic effort at import replacement, we decided that was good enough for us. When our friends' sow had piglets we booked up two. Since then we have almost always had a pig or two or three. We usually have two so that they are company for each other. One is sold and we eat the other, so the cost is reduced.

We figure to break about even on the cost of raising the pig to slaughter weight. The second pig, which we sell, pays the original cost of the two piglets and their food. We may even come out a bit ahead, but we do have to pay the

butcher to do the deed and to cut the pig up for us. We are not far from the district slaughter yards so we can take two pigs and the purchaser of our second pig will pick it up at the butcher's, jointed and cured to his specifications, in a fortnight's time.

I asked a friend whether she thought she made money on pigs. Her answer was to shrug and say, 'So who's counting?' Fair enough really.

COLLECTING THE LITTLE PIG

If everything is well planned then this is fine, a nightmare if it is not. Usually the breeder will want you to pick up the pig just at weaning, at six weeks. See if you can hold off until eight weeks (not very likely, but it is easier on the piglet). We were lucky with the last pair. Chris had separated the piglets from the sow about three days before collection and they were housed in a neat wooden sty a long way from mum. The kids of the family had handled the piglets, who by the time we arrived were quiet and tame and had been eating hard food (piglets, I don't know what the kids ate - seems to suit them). It was an easy and quiet job to reach in

and select a male and a female (gilt), and pop them into hessian sacks and from there into a wooden box (about 600 x 450 by 900 mm) with a wire mesh top. These two settled in very quickly, began to eat straight away and did not try to escape.

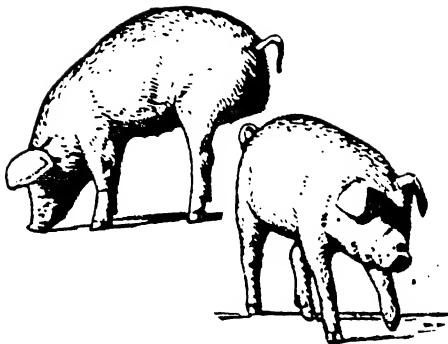
We have been in the situation of facing a sow with her litter and the owner saying, 'Pick which one you want'. No way am I jumping in to take the piglets from a sow I don't know! In one case the breeder chased the piglets about, and then pulled them screaming and kicking out of the enclosure and dumped them in my box. These pigs will cry for a day or two and fifty percent of them will jump madly in their enclosure in an effort to escape and run back to mum. Not good. If there is a lot of screaming and yelling going on, the whole business becomes rather fraught.

By the way, now is the time to figure out how you are going to transport the pigs when they are much much bigger (wait for a later article for more on transport).

LOSING YOUR PIG

Of our first pair of piglets, before we sussed out the fencing needed for them, the female led the male astray, and by astray I mean out of the pen. We put them back about three times the first night and thought we had solved the problem, but I happened to glance out the window while washing the dishes and saw two little shapes buzzing off in the darkness. Back they went - extra layer of barb on Stalpig 13. I checked last thing at night. No pigs. We went looking.

How do you find two lost little piglets in miles of closely forested bush? We found them not too far away,



mainly because they were grunting. We walked them home quite easily.

How do you find them? By looking. I think that if you lose a pig you must go and find it. It is likely to be fairly close. If you have been feeding it, it should come home. We call the pigs every time we approach with a feed bucket. I hope they will come to the call. Wild pigs are a great problem. These feral animals do much damage to the environment and are dangerous. We must not let domestic pigs escape to join them. You owe it to society to (a) prevent escape (b) when missing look until they are found.

BUDGET

The price of six to eight week old pigs seems to vary a little from \$25 to \$35, but we seem to pay \$35 most of the time. We have worked out that if we raise two and sell one, the sold one pays for the cost of bringing two pigs to sale size. You will need to pay the butchering expenses. All this depends on food cost. If you have your own food, the costs are much lower. If you buy in then: \$35 piglet + \$13 pig pellets + \$10 grain + \$1 x 60 kg to butcher = \$118 (remember this includes expensive Christmas hams and so on) = \$1.97 per kg

WHAT BREED?

The reality is that this question does not often apply because you do not have the luxury of choice. If you have a choice, consider a rare breed to help preserve the species. If not, go for a dark pig to avoid sunburn.

It is sad that many of the breeds we read about are so hard to find. My feeling is that we should, as backyard pig keepers, try to use these types as much as possible in an effort to preserve the breeds. You help by taking nonbreeding stock off the hands of the rare-breed breeder and supplying him/her with cash. However, as pointed out, the likelihood of this occurring in reality is slight.

Next time I'll write about how we house our pigs.

For associated information on rare pigs, see Megg Miller's article in GR141, 'Pigs In Need Of Preservation'. There is also an article on rare pig breeds in GR83. See p82 for how to order back copies.

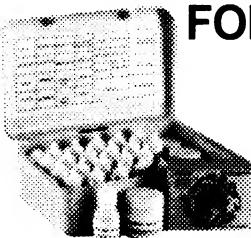


SPROUTS

Sprouts have become a staple in my diet, especially because they offer me an incredibly cheap continuous source of organic vegetables. I grow my own from a variety of organic seeds, legumes and grains. However, I am often away from my home for several days visiting or bushwalking, and have seen many a jar of mouldy sprouts in my day. Now I grow my sprouts in 500 gram Jalsa yoghurt containers so I can happily take them with me wherever I go. A small, light, unbreakable and yummy solution!

Belinda Pursey, Blackheath, NSW.

ALTERNATIVE THERAPIES FOR ANIMALS



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Make A Decorative Wreath

by Denice Moorhouse, Warragul, Vic.

I have always been interested in drying flowers and making dried arrangements, in particular the floral wreaths which can be so effective as decorations. However, it wasn't until my garden had been established long enough to provide enormous quantities of prunings that I thought of making my own bases.

My first attempts were all out of shape and I became frustrated trying to twine the lengths of vine through and through the weird shapes I had hoped to be a circle. Suddenly it came to me to take a length of say, banana passionfruit, and wind it round and round a flower pot until a good thickness had been achieved. This slips easily off the pot and still holds its shape. Twine only the last 30 centimetres or so (of each end) through the circlet and tuck the ends into the shape. It works every time to produce nice firm circles.

My favourite vines are banana passionfruit, grape and periwinkle which grows to great lengths in our usually well watered area. I am very fond of the banana passionfruit because it has most attractive curlicues. A vine called 'mile a minute' appeals to me because it has a very dark, very thin stem. Of course you would need greater lengths of this material. Very thin willow shoots (stripped of bark or not, according to desire) are also very attractive.

Decide what length you need, strip off the leaves and start winding. When you have finished your circlet you will have to decide whether it is thick enough for your taste. If not, repeat the process and then twine a length of about a metre binding both circlets together.

As you finish your fresh circlet it will be quite firm, but will loosen up as the material dries. This is not a bad thing because when you start inserting your

dried flowers and sprigs it is easier to insert them when there is a little slack.

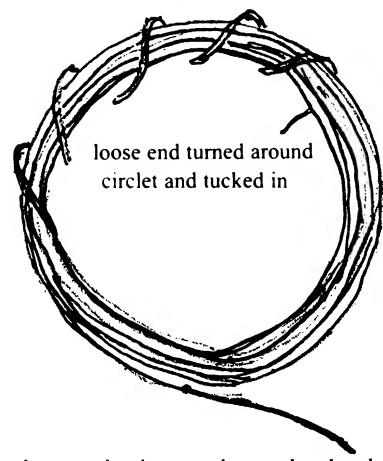
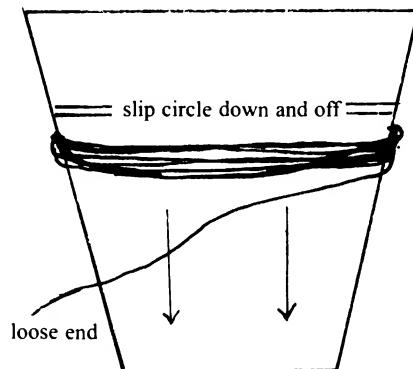
Finding material to use with your wreaths is an absorbing activity and one you will find yourself engaged in all through the year. Hydrangeas dry well and are very useful as 'fillers'. Colourful paper daisies add a particular brightness but they have very brittle stems and you will need the skill of a surgeon in inserting these without help from florists' wires. Leucodendrons dry rather dramatically. You can experiment to find what does or does not dry in a pleasing manner.

Sometimes plant material needs a little help to become a spectacular addition. Knife wattle and cootamundra will be exquisite and delicate looking, but quite robust, if picked when the blossoms are mere hints of things to come (not much bigger than pinheads) and the stems of the sprays are placed in a mixture of glycerine and boiling water and left for two or three months. The tips of *Eucalyptus gunii* or other silver leaved eucalypts become flexible and achieve a very pretty bluish colour.

I find fairy grass and fox tail grass dry easily and well and always look good. Another very decorative grass to use for accent is *Briza* spp (shivery/quaking or rattlesnake grass). There are about 20 species of annual and perennial grasses in this genus, the most common of which are *Briza media* (perennial) and *Briza minor* (annual).

There is no end to the dried material you can use, baby's breath, for example, lifts any arrangement. When a friend gave me some rosebuds on a day that reached 40°C inside I found I had perfectly dried pink rosebuds. I will try it on purpose another time.

To attach flowers to the base, a



loose end to be turned around and tucked in



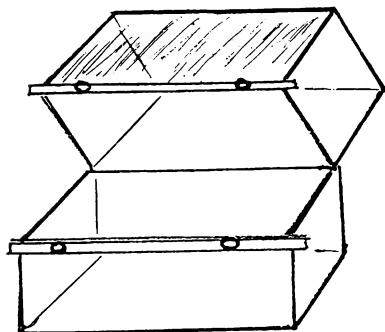
good trick is to tie them in small posies first using florists' wire. Then poke the end of the wire through the base and turn it around the wreath a few times. Individual flowers/grasses can be attached by simply poking their stems through the base. Beginners will probably want to tie them on with florists' wire, but you will most likely be able to do without this when you are more practiced.

When you are out walking keep your eyes open for naturally dried grasses or flowers. Happy twining.

SEED OR CUTTING PROPAGATOR

A mini propagator can be made from a throw away clear plastic cake container with a press-clip closure. Make drainage holes in the bottom half and fill it with growing medium. Plant seed or cuttings and clip down. Use a half of another container without holes to stand propagator in for a self-watering system. The clear base allows you to check root development.

Les McMillan, Banyo.



NATURAL ANT CONTROL

by John Mount, Woodford, Qld.

Ants rarely come indoors unless tempted by edible sweet or fatty substances, or forced inside by wet weather. It does little good to spray those that are inside unless those outside can be persuaded not to enter as well. Before taking any action, trace the ant trails back to their nests or holes. When you have located all the nests, pour boiling water into them. Other substances that can be used on the nests are lemon juice, talcum powder, powdered borax, crushed cloves, cayenne pepper, or garlic water. To make garlic water just mix two or three sliced or crushed garlic cloves in half a litre of warm water and allow to sit for 12 hours. An interesting observation is that if a quarter of a finely diced or crushed garlic clove is added daily to one litre of water, after a few weeks the water is so potent it kills instantly on contact and the water evaporates in seconds! Once the nests are attacked those inside will usually retreat to the remains of the nests (to either regroup or rebuild). Those inside the house can be dealt with by spraying them with a fine mist of garlic water, lemon juice water, or onion water. To prevent further invasions use the following repellents:

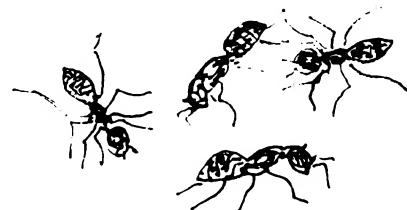
- Take 500 grams salt, 1 litre water, 10 kilograms bran or sawdust, four or

five litres molasses. Mix till crumbly and spread around areas and plants you wish to protect from ants.

- Two litres of water, 113 grams cape aloes (*Aloe ferox*). Bring to the boil and add 42 grams camphor. Spread around areas ants frequent.

- Spread over areas where ants gather small amounts of any of the following: essence of peppermint, tansy, strips of cucumber, cayenne pepper, or powdered borax.

To prevent ants from climbing posts, mix olive oil, castor oil, or any other suitable oils, with cayenne pepper, powdered borax, or chilli peppers and powders. Paint a six-centimetre thick line around the post and when the oil dries it leaves the anti-ant ingredients intact and active! Another form of deterrent that works on some species of ants is ordinary blackboard chalk; they often won't cross chalk lines on posts and poles. Spread pennyroyal, cucumber, talc, and lemon juice on ant trails to confuse and disperse them.



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POULTRY MASH

Now that we have our block of land in the country and a few chooks, there is a small problem that puzzles us. Occasionally, in poultry articles or in answers printed on this page, we see the word 'mash' used. What exactly is poultry mash?

**D & M Hinves,
RIDGEHAVEN 5097.**

Poultry enthusiasts will often encounter mash as one of several alternatives for feeding birds. Mash comprises a range of dry feed like lucerne chaff or powder, bran, pollard or millmix, meat or soya bean meal and perhaps a small amount of steamed, rolled oats or barley, plus a vitamin/mineral supplement, mixed with water or fermented milk to form a moist but not wet mixture. It was commonplace before commercial pellets and crumble were formulated. It is usually made up and mixed by the poultry keeper, though commercially prepared mash is available from a small number of feed companies. Look for recipes in old booklets published by Departments of Agriculture or Primary Industries if you want to try it, but buying all the ingredients you will need is costly at the start.

FLIES ATTACK EARS

Every summer both my dogs suffer with flies chewing off the corners of their ears. Usually we tape them up every day, but then they pull the tape off and the flies get in underneath. Can anyone recommend a cream or solution I could make to keep them away? Or perhaps an old issue with info on dog care products?

**Melinda Keast,
LYONS 2607.**

It is not uncommon to find dogs with irritated or even bleeding ears in summertime, the result of prolonged fly attack. Tackle this problem by first setting up some fly traps and reducing the numbers around your yard. Traps are easy to make and back copies of GR

have DIY examples. Next, look closely at the dogs' diet. Biting insects are highly attracted to animals that have sugar in their diet, have an overly rich diet or an inadequate intake of sulphur. Consult GR127, p35, for a brief outline of Pat Coleby's recommended dog diet and make appropriate changes. Consider buying and using her book 'Natural Pet Care'. Finally, some short-term protection of the raw or irritated ends of the dogs' ears will be necessary. Readers have previously mentioned great success with zinc cream, or you might like to try pawpaw or calendula ointment.

COMMERCIAL QUAIL

I want to find out about keeping quail, ratio of breeders, feeding, despatch age, numbers of eggs, broodiness, cholesterol in meat, and special requirements. Thanks.

**F Bailey,
RESERVOIR 3074.**

We assume you are referring to the commercial rather than ornamental species, and in particular *Coturnix* quail. It is important to remember that quail are essentially wild birds so cannot be let to wander freely. They are also vulnerable to rat, cat and crow predation. For these reasons they are usually intensively housed or kept in fully covered-in yards. The recommended ratio for breeding birds is one male to five females. The males, although slightly smaller bodied, are aggressive with females so a lower ratio is not considered fair on the hens. Quail need a high protein intake or cannibalism will occur. Feed should be in crumble form as anything larger may cause choking. Turkey rations are commonly used in lieu of specialised quail crumbles. Crushed grains, millet and budgie feed can also be given as well as green feed like lettuce. An adult bird is likely to consume about 130 g of feed per week. Quail mature at six weeks and this is

the most cost efficient age for despatch. The ideal weight of males is 220 g and 250 g for females of this age. Numbers of eggs laid will depend on management and feeding as well as genetics. Optimum lay is around 300 eggs per year, each egg weighing 10 g. A more realistic output is around 150 eggs, as egg lay declines greatly after six months of age. Eggs are usually artificially incubated. Commercial strains have been selected for egg lay so broodiness is less pronounced than in native quail species and the commercial shed or cage environment is not conducive to setting and hatching. *Coturnix* kept in a well set up aviary will often set and successfully hatch young. No figures are available on cholesterol content of quail meat but it is believed to be relatively low. As regards special requirements, the flightiness and natural aggression of this species needs to be considered if setting up for commercial return. Quail production is an area of poultry where people go in and out of business quickly, difficulties in procuring breeding stock and a poorly established marketing infrastructure being significant reasons.

ALLERGIES IN WHITE DOGS

My white dog suffers from allergies which result in a red rash on the tummy and under the 'armpits', this can become very sore with her scratching. The vet tells me this is common with white dogs, and treats it with cortisone cream, or injections. Last time I visited the vet she suggested I try giving the dog Omega 3 fish oil tablets, one tablet per day for each 5 kg of bodyweight. My dog weighs 22 kg, but I have started her on only one tablet a day, and it has worked beautifully, no more scratching. Other readers might want to try it as cortisone can have unpleasant side effects.

**Maureen Lucivero,
PERTH.**

MUNDULLA YELLOWS

A report by South Australian ecologist James McNamara links Mundulla yellows, a form of eucalypt dieback causing concern in that state, with use of knock-down residual herbicides. The combinations of amitrole/atrazine and glyphosate/aimazine, frequently used to control weeds along roadsides, railway lines and drains, around picnic areas, water metres, indicator posts, carparks and landscaped streetscapes, is taken up by the roots of eucalypts in the spray zone – with disastrous results. According to the report, there is no indication of an infectious pathogen causing the epidemic and symptoms are markedly associated with artificial landscape features.

ARTESIAN WATER RECOVERY

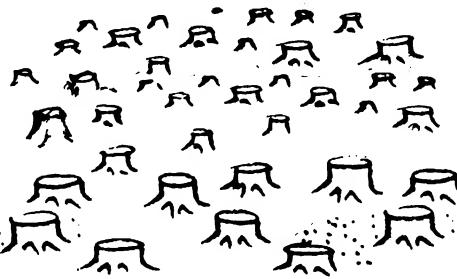
Amid growing concerns for ground water quality and sustainability in many areas a five-year program to improve water pressure and decrease wastage in the Great Artesian Basin was announced late last year. The GAB covers an area one-fifth the size of Australia and is the most valuable water resource of the inland. A century of overuse and inefficiencies have resulted in declining water pressure. The Commonwealth government has provided funding of \$31.8 million, to be matched by contributions from New South Wales, Queensland and South Australian state governments. Landholders in relevant areas will also be expected to contribute.

It is estimated that over 90 percent of water in open bore drains is lost through evaporation. The recently completed Coubal Pipeline, for example, replaces 270 km of open bore drains. Its 450 km of pipeline delivers artesian water to 250 concrete water tanks on 33 properties, saving approximately 700 megalitres of water per year and contributing to artesian pressure recovery.

DUNNARTS REDISCOVERED

Over 30 years since the species was last sighted in the area, a population of the nationally threatened sandhill dunnart has been rediscovered on the Eyre

Peninsula, South Australia. The dunnart is a carnivorous marsupial and the sandhill dunnart is the largest species of the family. The small group of dunnarts is being monitored by a National Parks and Wildlife contractor in association with Green Corps volunteers.



NATIVE VEGETATION

A new look at a 1995 – 1997 satellite study of vegetation clearing in NSW has found that the amount of clearing during that time period – 58,490 hectares – was double that originally estimated. The greatest concentration of clearing was north of Condobolin, and the greatest concentration of patches of clearing was associated with forestry operations around Eden. A major impact of such land clearing is the loss of native bird habitat. Land clearing is estimated to kill about 7.5 million birds per year. With one in five of our native bird species thought to be threatened with extinction, forestry clear-felling and large-scale land clearing operations urgently need a radical rethink.

On a brighter note, in the five years of the Carr state government the amount of land covered by national parks and other state-run conservation reserves has increased by 35 percent, from just over 4 million to 5.4 million hectares. Nationally, over 3.57 million hectares of high priority lands have been, or are in the process of being, added to the National Reserves System since 1996. Most are acquisitions, but some are as covenants.

Yet another study has reinforced the value of native tree cover on farms. A study in the Gunnedah area of NSW found that tree cover of up to 34 percent led to increased value of pasture

output per farm. No added benefit was found with tree cover over 34 percent.

A recent birds on farms survey by Birds Australia came up with some significant statistics, including: For every 10 percent increase in tree cover, bird diversity increased by 7 percent. Where more than 80 percent of the farm trees were local native species, the diversity of woodland-dependent birds was 43 percent greater. Small foliage-gleaning birds were 26 percent less diverse in areas where exotic trees had been planted instead of native species; conversely, exotic birds were about five times more diverse in these sites.

An illustrated copy of the report is included as a supplement in the December 2000 issue of the magazine, *Wingspan*.

RIVER REVIVALS

In South Australia the Premier, John Olsen, has promised to spend \$90 million to install six salt interceptors along the Murray River, the water in which has as much as 20 times the salt level of the World Health Organisation's drinkable water standard. Further funding, provided by both the Commonwealth and upstream states, will be used to address other natural resource issues along the Murray and its catchment with the aim of restoring the degraded river system in the next seven years.

A 700-metre stretch of the Canning River in Perth is being used to trial a new treatment for blue/green algal blooms. A thin layer of absorbent clay will be placed on the river bottom to absorb phosphorus and river sediment, locking up the phosphorus and starving the algae of their major food source.

BRIDAL CREEPER CONTROL

Another weapon has been released in the war on bridal creeper, an environmental weed posing a major threat to thousands of hectares of native vegetation. The new control measure is a rust disease from South Africa, the home of the insidious creeper. It will be used in conjunction with a previously released leafhopper and more conventional control methods such as the spraying of large patches of the weed.

FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear GR,

Anyone who has ever worked in the food industry will know of the huge amount of waste; enough to feed a lot of starving people in fact. Each time I go to the supermarket I think to myself, 'Wow – if I didn't have to spend all this money on food I'd be rich'. Well, if you **SAVE MONEY ON FOOD** you can be better off financially. You have to work at it a bit, you can't be a lazy dog and expect everything to miraculously happen for you. If something costs over \$5 per kilo, forget it. This applies to all types of foods: vegies, cat food, dog food and so on. Processed foods are more expensive than fresh foods and may contain GE elements and probably incur GST in some form or component of it.

If you've ever worked in the food industry you'll know that a lot of food which is thrown out is OK, it just doesn't look glamorous. Market gardeners know that 'the spotties' have more flavour than the perfect lookers and that just a bit sliced off makes it quite usable, and it has just as many vitamins.

I've been to countries where people don't get enough to eat and I know the waste that goes on in the sorting room at the supermarket. I ask for some duck food or pig food – at the very least it will be ideal for the compost pile. Vegetables such as tomatoes don't take much of a blemish to put them in the 'cooking tomato' category which makes them more flavoursome and ideal for Mediterranean dishes, sauces, and preserving by Vacola methods. Once you become known in the sorting room at the vegie supermarket as 'The Pigman' or 'The Ducklady', it's amazing how they will work in with you and save special boxes of unsaleable but quite usable vegies for your 'animals' and so on when you call every Tuesday. A cold tinny or two helps the general system along, but just make sure there is one for the boss as they can become temperamental for no reason at all if not included. Help the planet – reduce waste.

PS: My letter 9.10.00 asking for information about reducing the costs of dying has brought over 90 letters to date and I really thank everyone who replied. All very interesting. In fact most replies seemed very positive about 'going home', 'kicking the bouquet' and so on. One lady was very welcoming of 'moving on' because 'I won't have to pay any more bills'. There were many suggestions about illegal inexpensive ways to dispose of the corpse/cadaver/mortal coil/stiff, which I won't repeat so as not to encourage unlawful goings on, but I must say many were quite inventive.

Roberino,
Lot 4, ARRAWARRA BEACH 2456.

Dear GR,

I would be grateful if anyone could please help me with information and drawings of a **WORKING WINDMILL**. Thanks for a wonderful magazine.

Laurie Gray
1071 Buccrabendinni Rd,
BOWRAVILLE 2449.

A regular classified in the For Sale section of The Weekly Times lists Don, ph: 03-9714-8329 under sales, service and installation of windmills.

Dear GR,

I am asking **CHRISTA PALFRY** to please get in contact with Leny: 07-5544-1295, ph & fax, about the information she sent me on white-tail spiders.

Leny Van Der Hulst,

'Bell-Brook', Mt Lindesay Hwy, RATHDOWNEY 4287.

Dear Grass Roots Team & Readers,

Just had to put pen to paper this time around. Thoroughly enjoyed all letters in Feedback GR 141. Some intriguing issues in

several letters left me with a smile on my face.

Roberino – I do sincerely thank you for your Feedback letter on page 39. I have a similar story to yourself about a situation covering several years. I am now rather an enlightened being. The scumbags can be found in all walks of society. I really would care to compare notes with you privately on this very diverse subject of unfaithful people. I leave it here with a wise Russian proverb: Love all, trust a few, always travel in your own canoe.

I'm able to stay in there – on my own behalf a much happier person – thanks to Roberino the recycling king. You help us all to be self-reliant in our place of living, despite adversity. Well, Cindy also comes to town once in a while.

More on the subject of GST: We all have to live with it – all have to pay it on goods. So we must all eat it and/or wear it. It's a matter of eat it, wear it, shut up and pay up. A fair deal all round – no whinging allowed.

One other thing, ridiculous thought that it is, why does one need to buy a goat to bottle tomatoes?

Finally – 6 copies of GR can go to someone for \$15 (includes postage), No's 101, 106, 124, 125 & 120. If interested my address is listed here at the end of letter. Please keep up the interesting letters in Feedback.

Gaelle Murray,

PO Box 825, TAREE 2430.

Dear Megg & Mary & GR readers,

This is the first time I've written to GR, so the important things first: Thank you for a great magazine, we thoroughly enjoy reading it here in cold, wet Britain. Yes, we are mad enough to have taken out an air mail subscription, just to be sure not to wait too long for the next issue!

After four years of study in the UK (organic agriculture and overseas rural resource management), our family (wife, 5 year old son, and myself) are ready and eager to go back to Oz and get our hands dirty with 'real-life studies'. We will probably be arriving in Melbourne in July/August 2001, from where we are intending to set off **TRAVELLING ALL AROUND OZ**. And this is where you GRs come in. If you have any help/advice/addresses etc regarding the following we would be glad to hear from you:

1) We intend to buy a **MOBILE HOME/CONVERTED BUS** or truck or anything of the sort that can be our home on the road. Does anyone know where to get hold of a nice gem in the Melbourne area? Our first stop will actually be Yarram, south of Melbourne. Does anyone have any experience in travelling around Oz like this?

2) As we are completely open in terms of how long we are going to travel before settling down on our own piece of paradise, we would love to hear from GRs who can offer **WORK/WWOOF/BARTERING** to keep us alive during our travels. My wife is a trained nutritionist and is extremely versatile in her ability to help in all kinds of areas, such as setting up charities, brilliant wholefood cook, general business advice etc. I am trained in organic agriculture and rural resource management, am computer literate and a good all-round handyman, but most of all I like to do hard physical work on the land, or an eco-building site. We both love to help people build their dream houses, while learning more about eco-building as we do so.

3) Finally, we'd love to hear from anyone who has travelled around Oz (and other places) and is willing to share experiences/pitfalls. Particularly, we'd like to hear from parents who have **TRAVELED WITH CHILDREN**.

Thanks again for a wonderful magazine. Cheerio from Britain.

Markus, Stevie & Shaanan Braun,

8 Ellery St, London, SE15 3RL, UK.

email: mbraun@scientist.com

Great to hear from you. Do keep in touch and let us know about your travels.

FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear Megg & Mary,

Shortly after I met my partner 3½ years ago, I moved from Brisbane to Melbourne to live with him. We live within a 20 kilometre radius of the CBD in the north-eastern suburbs. Since my arrival the house has undergone some dramatic changes – all for the better naturally. Some of the rooms needed repainting, which I did with chemically free paints (thanks to an advertisement for a supplier featured in GR) and various wooden frames also received a coat of wood varnish minus chemicals. The next step will be to get rid of the 16 year old carpet, and have it replaced by natural wooden floors (this is particularly important as my partner suffers from a little bit of asthma).

I have grown up with parents who have been using permaculture for more than 20 years, living ecologically and environmentally consciously. However, it is a whole new ballgame when you don't have the back-up of your parents any more and are required to make your own decisions. My partner has undergone a (slightly gentler) change throughout the last 3½ years. He has learned to recycle, now buys environmentally friendly, Australian made and owned products, eats organic/biodynamic food and is very open to anything else that I introduce him to.

Our garden is currently experiencing a revegetation stage, with native plants such as bottlebrushes, banksias, boronias, flowering gums etc being planted all around. We managed to find a good home for a weeping rose bush which didn't really fit into this new bush environment. The only nonnatives left are a silver birch, a protea and my beloved herbs in all shapes and sizes. Recently we had to get a silty oak cut down as it was unstable and rotting, however, we requested that the stump be left in the ground and now the bottlebrush planted next to it is growing at twice the speed, thanks to its natural feeding source. We would also like to replace our 'golf lawn' with native grasses – can anyone give us an idea what is good to plant and where we can get the seeds?

Our next major project is to **FIND A SMALL ACREAGE** a little further out of town. Work commitments require us to remain within commuting distance of the CBD, but we hope to find around 10 acres or more (with or without a house) somewhere in the north-eastern suburbs such as Hurstbridge, Arthur's Creek, St Andrews, or even Yarra Glen. Because we have two cats and a pony we would need some pasture and couldn't consider properties with 'land for wildlife' or similar restrictions. If we found some land that is all pasture we would like to restore some of it to be bushland.

We have approached real estate agents in the area, but in typical fashion all they like to do is get their money without representing your best interest. Perhaps other readers may have some tips on how to deal with them, without getting too frustrated and broke. Personally we would prefer not to deal with them at all. We hope that someone somewhere has what we are looking for and we can deal with the owners direct. This not only saves agents' fees for the seller, but also avoids a lot of 'playing around'. Perhaps someone would like to move closer into the city onto a bush block?

Finally, a big thank you for all the support GR has given us. We are far from being the perfect GRs, but then who is? Thanks to you we are able to learn a lot of new skills and our knowledge increases with every issue, not to mention the hours of entertainment the magazine provides. GR is the first magazine we read from cover to cover every time! Keep up the excellent work GRs.

Since writing the above, we have found 5 acres at the foot of Kinglake National Park. We're still a bit dazed because it happened so fast. But we are very happy to have found it at last! We will remain at our suburban block for a further 18 months and then move. We're not sure yet whether we want to sell our sub-

urban bush block, or rent it out. Either way we welcome any interested parties to contact us. Perhaps we can arrange something like 'pay off in rates'. We would still like to find out more about native lawns and how other people 'converted' their suburban block into a bush haven.

On a different matter, if there is anyone who would like to find out more about Welsh Cobs or Welsh Ponies I can refer them to a friend of mine who knows all about them. She also has a Clydesdale (one year old) and isn't sure whether to keep him or not. Anyone interested? Lastly, does anyone know anybody who breeds Haflingers or who is thinking of selling one? I am trying to find one – have always dreamed of one day owning one. Email is: fish@yap.com.au, or phone 03-9434-6415. Thanks again for all your effort with a great magazine.

**Sonja Fischer & James Scott,
59 Allima Ave, YALLAMBIE 3085.**

There is an article in GR 6.7 (June '88) about Haflingers. The contact address given is: Haflinger Horse Society of Australia, Eve Paxton, 283 Killawarra Rd, Duffy's Forest 2084.

Dear GRs,

About 18 months ago I was very ill and have been left with partial paralysis of my lower body. This means I have very little feeling in my feet. This causes a problem because, as I can't feel my feet, I can't feel if shoes fit and only find out after I have worn them and I take them off to see red blistered areas on my feet, and sometimes raw flesh. All this can lead to gangrene and even loss of a foot as I am also diabetic.

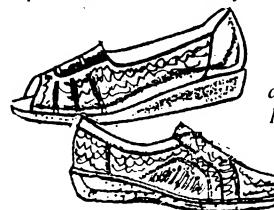
I have great trouble trying to find shoes to wear as I also have large feet, size 12 EEE (women's) or 45/46 continental. I find the continental size fits better than others, but shoes in larger sizes are few and far between. I wear knitted/crocheted booties in the house and men's slippers outside, but what I would like is some sort of shoes I can wear on a more social occasion.

If anyone has a **PATTERN TO MAKE SHOES** like flat court shoes made of fabric, knitted or crochet cotton, or a very very soft leather, or if you know of someone who makes such a shoe I would be pleased to hear from you.

Liz H,

PO Box 336, BATEMANS BAY 2536.

The book 'Shoes for Free People' by D and J Runk published by Unity Press (US) 1976, ISBN 0-913300-446, has details for making canvas shoes. Try on the Internet or book searchers for this title.



Dear Grass Roots,

Thanks for a most inspiring magazine. My partner and I eagerly await each edition, usually having had several disappointing trips to the newsagency before it eventually arrives on the shelf. We live on the central coast of NSW with our two dogs and would dearly love to find a house or cabin within approximately two hours of here that we could rent, house-swap or look after for the occasional few days. It would have to be private and have some sort of enclosed area so the dogs couldn't wander off by themselves. We consider ourselves to be very responsible and would take the utmost care of wherever we stayed. Also, if there are any **RESPONSIBLE DOG LOVERS** out there who'd be interested in looking after our house (500 metres from the beach) and walking and caring for our dogs daily (they live inside) for three weeks early in 2001, we'd love to hear from you.

**Emily & Joanna,
PO Box 883, TERRIGAL 2260.**

Contributors and correspondents who want letters or articles returned are requested to include correct postage.

FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear GR Readers,

A reminder please for those people writing to Feedback letter writers seeking information that the Feedback writer may have received: **ENCLOSE AN SAE** if you want an answer. A lot of GR people are pensioners, unemployed, or just struggling on the land or in the cities. Stamps cost money. Multiply that by a number of requests without an SAE enclosed, plus stationary plus time – that makes you a burden if you haven't enclosed an SAE. Follow the GR golden rule if you are writing to anyone seeking information, enclose an SAE.



**Possum Jack's Wife,
36 Martin Cres, BENARKIN 4306.**

Dear Helen & Owen,

Re your GR 141 questions about your **50 ACRES**. I have 30 acres and know the problem. I just do what I can do and leave the rest to Mother Nature. Tractors? These are expensive to buy and maintain and a lot of money tied up doing nothing a big part of the time, and they are the cause of 90 percent of farm accidents, nasty accidents you wouldn't believe. There is always someone around with a tractor with the exact accessories you require. They are experienced with that machine and can work in a fraction of the time and money you could. And when you pay for their time you can be doing something else instead of just looking at them and their tractor or other machine.

Bad soil? Use no-dig gardening, it also conserves water, your biggest problem in farming. Only tackle what you can handle. **START ANYWHERE – JUST DO IT.** You can plan till the cows come home but most plans go awry. There is a lot of *luck* in the whole shooting-match believe you me. Don't overcapitalise on one thing – don't put all your eggs in the one basket. Fruit trees are fine, except all the birds and bats etc know when they are ripe before you do. Underground 2.5 centimetre polypipe with a small hole drilled at the fruit tree (use a cordless drill with a very short drill – otherwise it will keep breaking everytime something knocks against it). Underground watering and mulching save a lot of water. Anything more than 2.5 centimetre polypipe is a waste. Overhead spraying wastes heaps of water in evaporation. Incorporate Zest or Aquasol in your watering system. Forget about waterpumps – have gravity feed – just a 200 litre drum will feed a lot of fruit trees. An old unroadworthy 4x4 for \$200 – \$500 makes a excellent tractor/jack-of-all-trades on a small farm. In poorer countries they pull ploughs with them – just scratch the surface is all you need or you'll destroy the soil structure.

Buy or go to the library and borrow permaculture books. Learn how to improve your land instead of wrecking it the traditional way. Old dyed-in-the-wool experts will think that you're nuts, but they will think this whatever you do – you're not a 5th generation farmer see. The only thing they are expert at is ruining the ecology of the land with their 100 years out of date methods. So don't get into arguments with them, just do your own thing.

Farming most sorts of animals is a guaranteed way to lose money. Watch 'Landline' ABC TV for new profitable crops. Be flexible – grow what brings a good price on overseas markets and get advice from the Department of Agriculture and CSIRO. Avoid GM crops as these are going to be on the nose for overseas buyers who want a pure uncontaminated product. When you get onto a winner you can think of expanding the acreage with that crop, employing some backpacker or WWOOFer labour to help. I could go on but that ought to keep you occupied for the next five years.

**Roberino,
Lot 4, Arrawarra Beach 2456.**

Dear Readers,

To remove the residue left from **STICKY PRICE TAG LABELS** wipe over with Mr Sheen. Eucalyptus oil also works, but

I've found it to be too harsh and it tends to melt plastic. I've never had any damage from using Mr Sheen.

About 15 years ago a doctor suggested I try a few drops of **OLBAS OIL** rubbed onto my forearm to relieve the pain from RSI. I have also found it useful for various other aches and pains, such as for a jinked neck from sleeping in an awkward position, or caused by sudden movement, and twinges caused by period pain. My mum has found it wonderful for the relief of arthritic aches in her legs, arms, neck and shoulders. It can also be used as an inhalant to clear the sinuses. It is readily available from your local chemist.

For the occasional **HEADACHE** try a smear of lavender oil mixed with a dab of sorbelene cream rubbed into the temples and forehead. Using straight lavender oil may be too strong for some people with sensitive skins. I have found that supermarkets such as Woolworths sell lavender (and eucalyptus) oil made by Australian companies at an affordable price. For relief of the itch caused by insect bites try a dab of one of these oils: tea tree, lavender or eucalyptus oil.

I would like to purchase a second-hand electric food dryer and the following early issues of *Grass Roots*, numbers 1 – 7, 10, 11 and 13.

I am still very interested in contacting people who knew my father, Danny Hunter, as previously mentioned in GR 135 page 38.

I have mentioned a number of times over the years to Megg and Mary my desire to see **MORE ARTICLES ON OWNER BUILDING**. The problem is, of course, that if people who are doing the building won't write articles, how is GR going to publish them? Don't wait until several years after you've finished your house to sit down and write a few paragraphs about the house you've built. You can't do justice to your efforts in a few lines. Write in and tell us what you're doing now. Tell us how you found your land and why you decided to owner build, are you living on site, what sort of house are you building and why, how did you choose and peg out your site, dig the foundations, put in the poles, frames, walls, put on the roof, fit out the inside, and what materials are you using? What sort of garden are you putting in, what arrangements have you made for your water supply and electricity, are you building a composting loo, or perhaps a reedbed for your waste water and so on? Tell us about your mishaps too, and what you've learnt and what you'd do differently. Every aspect of the building process is an article on its own. Long-term readers would be delighted to hear how you are progressing over the years, and an article written while you're doing it will contain the emotions of the moment, which will fade with time if you leave the writing to the distant future, where it may become merely a list of what you've done. Even if writing is not your thing, then speak into a tape recorder about what you've done, and then type it up from that. That way you don't have to think what to write, you just write what you've said. You could talk to yourself, or to someone else and tell them about building your house. I'd also like to see some articles written by lone female builders. It could be one of your articles that provides the impetus for someone else to realise that if you could do it, then so can they.

Anne,

PO Box 611, GLEN INNES 3233.

We heartily endorse Anne's words about owner builder articles. We'd love to hear about your project. Please include photos also.

Dear Readers,

Do enjoy and learn heaps from the practical down-to-earth suggestions in your magazine. We live in the city but grow most of our own vegies and have bees and hens. I am challenged by the saying 'Live simply so others can simply live'.

Has anyone found an easy way to get **SUNFLOWER SEEDS AND PUMPKIN SEEDS** out of their husks for eating?

Maree Murphy,

45 Woodvale Grove, LOWER HUTT New Zealand.

FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear Grass Roots,

Please find enclosed a pamphlet opposing a 'green' power station proposal that will burn the 'waste' from the clear/felling of native forest for woodchipping. A bill has recently been passed in the Australian Senate to allow this to be labeled a renewable and sustainable form of energy generation. This electricity will potentially be sold in Victoria via Basslink. For further information on this proposal check out www.southwoodresources.com.au

The issue of tree plantations is a contentious one in Tasmania. Both prime farmland and native forest are the targets for this industry which attracts a 100 percent tax exemption for investors. The plantations result in habitat destruction, poisoning of wildlife and use of pesticide chemicals in areas where people live. Water contamination, property devaluation, machinery noise, log trucks and accidental poisoning of domestic animals are just some of the effects on neighbours of these plantations. It is apparently considered sustainable to clear-fell thousands of hectares of native forest, poison unique native animals and plant rows upon rows of genetically identical eucalypts to the exclusion of any other species.

A Cauchi,
PO Box 47, HUONVILLE 7109.

To the Editor,

I do enjoy reading your magazine, but was disappointed to find that in 'What's Special About Your Locale?', my article was printed entitled 'Mannum', whereas my actual submission was entitled 'Claypans'. Mannum happens to be my postal address, but it in no way resembles Claypans.

Esther Marshalls,
RMB 575, MANNUM 5238.

Apologies for the confusion Esther.

Dear Megg,

Hope you can print my letter soon, need some answers.

1) Can anybody tell me where I can obtain Hoyts (or similar) SAMBUCCA ESSENCE now, as NSW homebrew shops are no longer allowed to sell (even for cake icing flavouring which some did for a while)?

2) Can anybody tell me if I could grow GINGER AND PISTACHIO NUTS in my area? We are quite cold in winter, hot summer, but with our altitude we don't get humidity problems.

3) Is it legal to GROW YOUR OWN TOBACCO in NSW?

4) I have a question or two about GUINEA FOWLS which I hope one of the readers can answer. We have taken over a property and 13 were left here as they are wild and fly up into the trees at night. During winter we didn't find any eggs as they are really free ranging over a few acres. I have found one lot of 28 eggs hidden in a bush and the odd one just lying in the paddock right out in the open. The shells are so hard my husband ran over one with the tractor wheel and it didn't break. Questions are: Is it usual for them not to lay eggs in winter? Can anyone tell me how to sex them as they seem identical?

Love your magazine and eagerly await its arrival.

Glyn & Carol Jenkins,
'Hidden Valley Lodge', 3615
Willowtree Rd, MERRIWA 2329.
Ph/fax: 02-6548-8515.

GR 83 contains information on sexing guinea fowls. See p82 for how to order back copies.

Dear GR & Readers,

Reading all your letters in the Oct/Nov issue makes me think that at least there are some worthwhile people in the world. I live in a large block of units in a suburb of Melbourne and recently I have been made very unhappy by the behaviour of neighbours who

don't seem to care about the environment or, indeed, their next-door neighbour. I have made **GOOD NEIGHBOURLY GESTURES** thinking that they would be reciprocated but, alas, when it comes down to the nitty gritty, they just don't care. This upsets me very much and I would dearly love to find a nice spot where people are concerned about other people and the world and environment they live in, but it's not easy for me as I am a 73-year-old disabled person and it's difficult to know where to move to and where I'm not going to be placed in the same position. If any readers can offer any suggestions please write; at least hearing from you would cheer me up enormously. Love your magazine and the people that it attracts.

Shirley Poole,
2/27 York St, BONBEACH 3196.

Dear GR Readers,

And to Shirl Williamson (GR 140 page 42) in particular. SHINGLES can be stopped in its tracks if you can find a doctor who is willing to give you an intravenous vitamin C drip. My wife had shingles off and on for many years, none as bad as the first attack, but definitely restrictive of activities while the attack lasted. And nothing, but nothing, would relieve it. She was fortunate that the worst lasted about three to four days then tapered off, eventually disappearing altogether. We think the attacks were caused by contact with children (as a teacher) who may have had chickenpox.

She had just changed doctors, for personal reasons, and during the second consultation mentioned the shingles that had just started to build up that morning. After suitable questioning to ascertain that it was shingles, the doctor informed her that she believed an intravenous vitamin C drip could alleviate it. My wife's reply was: 'Anything as long as it stops the pain'. So the drip was arranged, 15 grams over half an hour, with at least two glasses of (good) water to be drunk during that time. The drip finished, we headed home, an hour to one-and-a-half hour's drive. About halfway home I asked about the shingles, was informed that it was still 'niggling'. On arriving home I asked again. The reply was: 'It's gone'.

About two years later, at the beginning of the week, the shingles started up again. Not wishing to go down to the city then, as we had an appointment with the doctor for the next week, the increasing pain was put up with for about three days. Realising that by the weekend the pain would be unbearable and no doctor available, the consulting room was rung. The reply was to get there first thing next morning, which we did.

Just over half an hour later, and a 15 gram intravenous vitamin C drip completed, we headed for home. Before half of the trip was completed I was informed that the pain had gone. We had been told to come back the next morning if there was no relief. On talking it over we decided to go back anyway. The reasoning was, considering the pain buildup, maybe it was only temporary relief. A 30 gram intravenous vitamin C drip and then, better than 10 years later, no return of the shingles. Since my wife retired from teaching we have come in contact with chickenpox twice through the grandchildren and had no repeat of the shingles.

I've had several intravenous vitamin C drips myself for colds that wouldn't let up, with good results. One possible side effect is a slight diarrhoea if you haven't had vitamin C supplements. We ourselves didn't have any trouble. One precaution, have an empty bladder before starting the drip or there could be quite a procession to the loo and back.

Owen, from SA.

Please keep letters brief, clearly written and relevant to self-sufficiency topics. Letters pushing barrows (religious, political or other) will not be published.

FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear Megg and Mary,

At last some words of truth about **KIKUYU GRASS!** When I read the highly praised Alan Hayes *It's so Natural House Book* I was flabbergasted that he suggested growing the horrible stuff. Growing kikuyu in a garden is in complete defiance of all permaculture principles. He had many other very questionable ideas, like suggesting electricity is the most expensive form of energy. He obviously has no experience of LP gas. I wrote to the publishers with many suggestions and questions, but never heard back from them.

Now and then I see someone in Feedback after this and that **EDIBLE PLANT**. At Premier Nurseries, Leeton Road, Griffith 2680, they have a remarkable range of edible plants. Currently they waste their money on local TV advertising and junk mail. Why don't you send them a copy of your great mag with a nice letter giving your advertising rates and point out that readers actually read the ads in *Grass Roots*. Yes, they will post out certain plants.

Many Grassrooters have only been buying the mag for a few years and might not be aware of some of the books around. There is now an updated edition of *The Hard Times Handbook* by K & I Smith. This would have to be one of the most essential of self-sufficiency books around. I often see people after some information through Feedback that would be answered by this book. In my local library there is a copy of *The Newnes Home Maintenance Manual*. My thoughts on reading it were about how times have changed. In those days it seems things like washing machines and refrigerators were a luxury item. There are plenty of clear 3D diagrams, but not a single photograph or one bit of colour. Definitely not a coffee table book, they had not been thought of then.

Alexander Cranford,
PO Box 439, HAY 2711.

Dear Grass Roots,

Where do I start? First of all, thanks for a great read. My mum-in-law got us into the mag about three years ago. Now I'm addicted and so is the other half. We have bought the mag on and off over that time, but I really wanted to get my hands on some earlier issues. Thanks to wonderful mum-in-law, we now have a huge collection! She gave us over 100 of them!

Anyway, thanks to GR, we have finally followed our dreams and moved to the country. We are buying the 18 acres we are living on from, you guessed it, my in-laws! (Who said they are hard to get along with!)

We have three boys aged 5, 2½ and 1½. I'll be having our 4th boy on December 29th 2000. We absolutely love gardening and we plan to be as self-sufficient as possible (rates still have to be paid don't they?). Our kids are loving it here in the bush and so are we.

I'd love to hear from anyone! I dabble a bit in writing (film scripts, plays, skits) and am about to embark into books. I would really like to **HEAR FROM MUMS** who have had **CAESAREAN BIRTHS**. Write and tell me if you went through the hell I did! I would like to get a book together about the so-called 'easy way out of birth'. Also, anyone who has suffered from post-natal depression, depression, social phobias or dysthymia. I'm happy to reply to everyone. What the hell, just write and tell me how your day was!

Nikki C,
C/- Post Office, DERGHLOM 3312.

Hope this birth went well and your new baby is healthy and contented. All the best to your family from all at GR.

Dear all at GR,

It was a pleasant surprise to find my article on earthworms in GR141. *Worms. Mystery and Mystique*, I had totally forgotten about it as I wrote it in 1996. Although a lot has happened in the worm growing industry since then, the comments in my article are still current. We have also moved to Pambula on the far south coast of NSW.

The promised money making bonanza balloon for investors in

worm growing has burst, thankfully sooner and with less damage than happened in the USA some 20 or so years earlier. Compost-type worms are relatively easy to persuade to breed and do good work for us, the biggest problem is their artificial home, waste recycling unit or worm farm bin. Many designs of bins have appeared, but much research, trial and error still remains. Some large commercial waste disposal companies are beginning to use worms and their associated living organisms to convert household, commercial and industrial wastes into useful soil additives instead of wasteful landfill. These companies have permanent skilled staff to supervise the process, whereas most householders want a bin that can be used to place wastes in and look after itself.

It is a challenge to us all to experiment with **HOUSEHOLD WORM FARM BINS** of different sizes to suit different size households. We must compare notes. I have found that a larger surface area of a worm bed is more important than its depth. It must be rodent, cat and dog proof, sheltered from heavy rain, have hinged lid (one-handed operation), be made of material that has a reasonable life, have a means of collecting surplus liquid if this is required. The list is long! Any drainage channels below the main body of worm casts must have provision for frequent flushing with water as they quickly become filled with casts. It is a case of one size does not fit all!

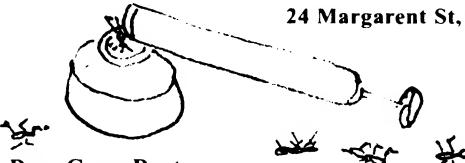
Graham Roberts,
500 Oaklands Rd, PAMBULA 2549.

Dear GR,

Hope this will help any **BUGGED-OUT** gardeners. Mix one red pepper and four or five cloves of garlic, diced; and add cup of water. Leave for 24 hours, then strain and put into spray bottle. Good for vegetables and flowers.

John Lewis,

24 Margaret St, KORARAH 2217.



Dear Grass Roots,

Hello to all fellow GR fanatics out there. I've been reading this great mag for about four years now and have finally decided to write a letter to Feedback. I live in the Riverland area of South Australia. We have 18 acres and grow apricots for drying and have also started with olive growing. It's fairly dry here (only about 300 mm of rain each year), but irrigation from the Murray River turns this arid area green with vines and fruit trees.

Most people here are still fairly reliant on chemicals, but on our block we try to keep the use of chemicals down to a minimum. Chooks are a great way to keep down the weeds, but one that seems to have gotten on top of us lately is **ONION WEED**. Does anyone have any tips for getting rid of it on a large scale? I have been told geese would eat it, but so far they haven't touched it, neither do the sheep or horses.

We are all nervous about locusts here, with predictions of the largest plague ever! There are plenty of hatchlings and possible fly-ins during Nov - Dec. By the time this letter is printed I would have found out whether they do any damage to our plants. I've been told they'll eat anything green, even shade cloth.

I am interested in obtaining any information on **WILTSHIRE HORN SHEEP** or Wiltipoles, mules in Australia and pig keeping. Anyone with useful info on the above please write.

Allison,
PO Box 446, Barmera 5345.

Re your request for specific livestock information, a good starting point for Wiltshire Horns is the article in GR107, and you'll be pleased to find the first of several pig keeping articles in our current issue.

FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear GR Readers,

In reply to Pat Mitchell's letter (GR141), we too fell in love with the romantic notion of the **NECTRE BAKERS OVEN** and have recently installed one. It's a neat and solid little unit, burns well, puts out enough heat for a temperate climate like we live in, seems to cook OK both in the oven and on top, and can even take a water back (have the holes predrilled and you can connect one later). So on the whole we are happy with it, though there are some drawbacks:

The firebox is quite small, both width and depth, therefore logs have to be cut much shorter (ideally 25 centimetres) than for most slow combustion heaters (bagged or bulk wood is usually 30 - 35 centimetres) and should be split into small sections for best burning to really heat the oven up.

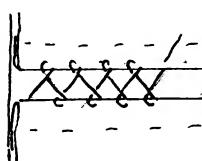
It seems to be 'leakier' than most slow combustion stoves. If you get a downdraft in the flue during gusty winds, smoke pours out every hole - the air inlet, the air slot across the top of the door, and the poker holes in the cooktop lids. My dealer recommended extending the flue to prevent the downdraft. I was told of a lady who bought one as her sole means of cooking, but found that if you have the fire stoked up enough for the oven it is far too hot to stand next to and stir the pots on the top. This shows the difference, I suppose, to an Aga or similar, which is all fully insulated and the heat directed purely to the cooking areas, where the Nectre is just a cast iron box and radiates heat from all surfaces.

Most important, make sure you see one in the flesh before you order it, preferably working. Good luck.

Ran Boydell,
PO Box 139, MEREWETHER 2291.

Dear GRs,

Could anyone help with **DIRECTIONS FOR FAGGOTING** in baby wear, please?



Val English,
10 Templeton St, GORDONVALE 4865.
Faggotting is joining two pieces of fabric together with a decorative stitch to create a lacy effect. The fabric is usually tacked to paper, leaving the space between for faggotting, using trellis stitch or twisted bars.

Dear Editor,

I'm a great fan of GR. Could any readers advise me where I can get some information on the effects of **MAGNETIC FIELDS** on the body? I am concerned about my children as we live about 10 metres from a five-dish mobile phone tower. Do these pose any cancer risks?

J Crohn,
PO Box 1942, BUNDABERG 4670.

Dear Grass Roots,

Hi, I have just acquired a house cow and am having a lot of fun, making butter, cream and lots of goodies with the excess milk. I was just wondering if anyone would have an easy recipe or method to make my own **YOGHURT**. I would be grateful for any help with this. And also I would just like to say what a great job every contributor does to make GR such a great magazine.

Fay Granger,
'Bruangil Park', Bass Hwy, GRANTVILLE 3984.

Dear GR & Readers,

Love it, GR that is. Thanks for changing my life. I put an ad in for a pen friend, now I have 27 of them. Well, I replied to all but I'm writing to six of them. Hi guys, and Benis from Wimbin if you read this please write soon, we are hanging out for a letter! I am also writing to see if anyone has a copy of **ESTHER DEANS' GARDENING BOOK** and the **ESTHER DEANS' COOK BOOK**.

I just want to say how amazed I am with the parents who home school their children, you are all amazing.

Karen Kneale,
'Glen-Mona', TOMINGLEY 2869.

Dear GR & Readers,

What a fab magazine! Over the years your articles have inspired me and the Feedback letters have given me the courage to finally take the plunge and leave the city. I would like to say thank you to each and every one for such an honest and down-to-earth read.

I have recently moved to a property on the south coast of SA and could do with some good advice regarding **STORING AND KEEPING EXCESS PRODUCE** - shows what a die-hard optimist I am, I've only just planted the vegies and I'm already worrying about having too much!

I'd love to hear from anyone, in particular like-minded souls around the same area.

I'm also available on email: rainsouth@hotmail.com

Jo Paterson,
RMD 255, Inman Valley 5211.

Dear GRs,

I regularly dye clothing and fibres with **COLD WATER POWDER DYES**. However, I am concerned about the **TOXICITY** of these products. I have books on dyes from natural materials, but I would need a lot of resources for the amount of dyeing that I do. So, would anyone know of a **SUPPLIER OF NATURAL DYES**?

Marianne O'Connor,
PO Box 40, CHILTERN 3683.

Dear GR,

M Runke on reducing living costs (GR141): Try **SWAPPING** - I have five hens (and one rooster) supplying me with more eggs than I can eat. I give eggs to a friend who gives me homemade jam - yum. A neighbour makes chutney and pickles and is always looking for glass jars. In exchange for glass honey jars, mulberries, loquats and chocos, she keeps me supplied in chutney and pickles. Surplus fruit I feed to my chooks, after cutting into bite-size pieces - they love mulberries that fall to the ground. All seed from fruit, stone fruit, grapes, passionfruit etc goes into seed boxes. Seedlings are swappable also.

If potatoes turn green (toxic) they are planted. Bought bunches of celery or shallots, I cut off the root stock 40 or 50 millimetres from the bottom, and plant (eating the rest). The regrowth is not so robust, but okay. A couple of beetroot and radishes were looking dehydrated and seedy in my vegie box, so they were planted and are producing seeds for next season (seeds are swappable). I plant onions and marigolds amongst the vegies to repel ground-dwelling and airborne nasties.

Clothes washing the easy way; all you require is two drums with lids - the old milk containers with tight lids are ideal. Fill one with water and soap suds and place in car boot or in the ute. Place in all your whites. When driving to town the bumpy road agitates the water and separates impurities. Make sure lid is on tight and container cannot fall over. Park near a tap. Fill container number two. Transfer all washed clothes into container number two for rinsing. Place coloureds into soapy water for washing on return journey.

To Margaret Tranter (GR141): **GASES FROM PISTON ENGINES** expand approximately 1½ times. A silencer allows gases to expand within an enclosed container to re-enter exhaust system, to be expelled. So I cannot see why car mufflers cannot be used. I would avoid the mufflers full of fibreglass wool, as this holds condensation and increases corrosion, becoming clogged and ineffective. Fibreglass wrapped around outside of muffler would be more efficient. Care must be taken to avoid vibration noise (use flexible support or rubber mounts).

Kel Connell,
'Karma Cottage' 61 Tarean St, KARUAH 2324.

Anonymous letters will not be published. Please indicate if you would like personal details to be withheld.

FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Howdy,

A few **TROPICAL TIPS**. To kill mozzie wrigglers in plant ponds with no fish, cover surface with olive oil. To stop ants etc climbing vegie and fruit stems, cover a portion thickly with petroleum jelly – it's waterproof too!

I'll swap Ceylon spinach seeds for snake, winged, or poor man's bean.

I enclose addresses for **PLANT CATALOGUES**, but they don't advertise in GR.

EN, PO Box 500, Maleny 4552. (4 x 45c stamps)
EA, PO Box 30GA, South West Rocks 2431. (4 x 45c stamps)
Kings Seeds, PO Box 975, Penrith 2751. (5 x 45c stamps)
EP, PO Box 323C, Wauchope 2446. (4 x 45c stamps)
Gardens, PO Box 379, Nimbin 2480. (2 x 45c stamps)



Hillside Nursery, Lot 4
Witham Rd, Gympie 4570.
(SAE)

Bundanoon Nursery, PO
Box 83, Bundanoon 2578.
(SAE)

L Roach,
PO Box 73M, MANUN-
DA 4870.

Dear Megg,

Being a voracious reader I usually scruff my better half's copy of GR before she gets a chance to get a read of it! There are many bits and pieces that I quite enjoy in it and at times I have been tempted to put pen to paper and answer some of the queries that have been raised in the magazine. Like many other Australians I suffer from the malady 'don't do today what you can put off till tomorrow'. So until now, I have not got around to doing anything about writing at all.

I do not recall a great deal about '**GENETICALLY MODIFIED' ORGANISMS** in the magazine, or perhaps I have tried to ignore it in the hope that it will go away. Either way my education in such matters was sorely lacking. Over the past few years I have been doing some research into a book on the shrinkage of citizens' rights in today's society and I saw a book review that seemed to be aligned to the subject, so bought the book and read it to see what it had to say on the subject. Shortly after this occurred, the Tasmanian government advertised for public submissions into genetic modifications as part of the process of enacting legislation on the subject in this state. Since I now believe that my education had been updated by the book, I put pen to paper and responded. I enclose a slightly modified copy of my submission for you to use for the edification of your readers if you are so inclined. Keep up the good work!

Since you are in the process of collecting data about the pros and cons of genetic modification (GM), I would seriously suggest that you acquire the book: *Naked Ape to Superspecies*, by David Suzuki and Holly Dressel, Allen & Unwin 1999. David Suzuki is a well known environmentalist and wildlife television documentary maker. Prior to this he was a geneticist. Although the book is not solely about GM, the chapter devoted to this subject makes for very interesting reading. Some of the other chapters give some very pertinent background as to why GM is currently being pushed so hard.

One of the major problems, as I see it, with GM, is that it is generally not a once-off crop, and, once released into the wild it has the ability to take over anything in its path. To give you a quick example of this, the book above mentions a bacteria strain that was genetically modified to digest greater amounts of stockpiled manure than was normally the case. In Europe, it is apparently common for farm animals to live indoors over winter and the manure volume produced can be rather large. The smells emanating from this ordure can be quite offensive, so the bacteria was

modified to do something about it, like digest it. I believe that before it was released, the company involved in production of this organism decided to import it into America. At this time, the government still maintained facilities for the testing of such organisms (a very different situation today!). During testing it was accidentally discovered that this particular bacteria killed off all other bacteria that it came in contact with. As you are no doubt well aware, all plants require bacteria of one sort or another to make them grow. Imagine the consequences if this new strain had been released? It would not take very long for all plants to stop growing, including food plants! What sort of upheaval would this have caused on a worldwide basis?

Bear in mind that under current United Nations charters, to which Australia is signatory, it is illegal for Australia to prevent the importation of GM-modified anything. If it should have a catastrophic consequence, guess what? The companies releasing the GM-modified anything are not responsible for cleaning up of the mess (assuming it can ever be cleaned up!) if it should get out of hand. It is the responsibility of the country with the 'mess' to fix it! In other words – innocent taxpayers' money!

John Hardisty,

PO Box 154, BURNIE 7320.

We've included just a little of John's submission to the Tasmanian government and heartily endorse his recommendation of 'Naked Ape to Superspecies' to anyone interested in this topic, or the environment generally. Congratulations John on having the initiative to make your views known to this enquiry.



Hello Everybody,

There have been a lot of queries about **ASTHMA** in the Feedback lately, especially regarding children. I suffered from asthma for most of my life and have tried just about all the treatments available, using both conventional and natural methods. One day my sister told me of somebody she knew whose child had success with the **BUTEYKO METHOD** and sent me some information she found on the internet. It explained that, according to Dr Buteyko, asthma was not a disease but a symptom of hyperventilation – overbreathing – which is not always obvious but may be exceeding the body's requirement. This basically causes an imbalance of blood gases within the body, leading to a range of problems. The Buteyko method works on the theory that asthma is the body trying to regulate the gases by narrowing the airways. Oversensitivity of the lungs is also caused by the imbalance. After much research (I am a sceptic), I did the course.

The instructor explained in detail the body's response to hyperventilation, the causes of hyperventilation (it is surprising the number of causes), and the methods to normalise breathing patterns. Any questions or doubts I had were satisfactorily resolved. I was told not to give up my medications, but soon I found it not necessary to use medication at all.

The method may also be applied to other disorders, such as hay fever, allergies, emphysema and sleep apnoea. It must be practised under the guidance of a trained Buteyko practitioner who needs to prescribe exercises to suit individuals. The method requires some dedication on the patient's behalf, but for me it was well worth the effort as my quality of life and overall health are much improved. I think it can be done with children as young as four upwards. I encourage anyone who is interested to look up a practitioner in their capital city. I believe there is one in most states.

Esther Marshall,
RMB 575 Mannum 5238.

FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear Fellow Grassrooters,

Martin and I met through a Feedback letter in GR 17 years ago. They have been happy years, and we'd like to give you an update of our life. We live on a 100 acre bush block with natural vegetation, lots of wallabies, echidnas, all sorts of birds, and some snakes. Two years ago we had a bushfire go through part of our bush, a very traumatic experience, especially as such fires are rare on King Island. Because we live in peat country, the fire burnt for four weeks. Luckily it did not reach the house. This winter the dead trees have fallen everywhere, many over our drive. We keep cutting them. It is good firewood, but a lot of work for two middle-aged people and one chainsaw! Sadly, the regrowth is very slow because the topsoil has burnt away and the ground is very sodden. The only vegetation coming up so far is bracken fern. Has anyone any ideas how we could speed up the revegetation process?

As energy source we always had a generator which we used for running the washing machine and vacuum cleaner. At the same time it recharged a 12 volt car battery. We had a few 12 volt emergency lights in the house, ran a radio and occasionally a TV over the battery. This year we decided to invest in two 75 watt solar panels plus two 12 volt deep-cycle car batteries. We worked out that this system is enough for our consumption and **CHEAPER THAN INSTALLING A GOVERNMENT SUBSIDISED SYSTEM** which required a minimum of six panels. The two panels have been on the roof since mid October and we are very pleased with the results. The batteries get charged even when it is raining! We certainly did not expect that. We run a TEAC televideo (combined television and video), capable of running on either 12 or 240 volt, radio, laptop computer plus printer (both over an inverter), a range of 12 volt lights, depending on usage either halogen, incandescent or fluorescent. With the light in the passage we have one problem not worked out yet: how to wire the light so that we can switch it on and off at both ends of the passage. Any suggestions how to do the wiring for this and which kind of switches we need?

For those interested, we also have an Orion televideo, also 12 volt, which uses less power than the TEAC. Because our television reception is bad, we only get ABC reasonably well, and we like watching film, we have a collection of videos. Does anyone know of a place selling videos by mail order?

We are so satisfied with the power production of the solar panels that we are thinking of buying a cooler, sold by Innovations, which uses 12 volt. Has anyone experience with this and can you tell us how many watts it uses and how good they are in cooling?

Our last question concerns the garden. We have a nice area fenced in as vegetable garden, but it is infested with **KIKUYU GRASS**. We have tried mulching very thickly which controls it to a degree. Have dug out as many roots as possible, but it seems to be spread more and more. How can we get rid of it without using poison?

If anyone is interested in learning more about our way of life, how our energy system works, or about the Island, we will answer all letters. Martin and I both like corresponding by snail mail and have met some interesting people through GR. We both like reading, good food, a good film. Martin does a lot of photography, some pottery and draws. I like spinning, knitting, extending my knowledge and generally pottering around.

**Martin and Eva Finzel,
Bag 960, CURRIE, KING ISLAND 7256.**

Dear Grass Roots,

I purchased my first edition of GR a few issues back and it has really opened up a whole new world to me, and leaves me with a good feeling. I am writing to ask if anyone could please send me

Contributors and correspondents who want letters or articles returned are requested to include correct postage.

any information or recipes about natural **NONTOXIC BODY PRODUCTS**, including ingredients and creams. Also information regarding the **EXTRACTION OF AROMATHERAPY OILS** using steam distillation, past or present methods. I would really appreciate any help.

**Dayna Stewart,
90 Morrison St, REDCLIFFE 6104.**

Dear GR Readers,

Firstly, I really enjoy your magazine. My husband and myself have really benefited from all your great articles and handy tips. I was wondering whether any GR reader has a set of **OSTER AS ANIMAL CLIPPERS** and blades they are willing to sell? Sunbeam do not make these clippers anymore and the newer brands don't seem to do the job. I am willing to pay a reasonable price and postage. Please write and let me know. Also, would anyone have any spare seeds for the double red flowering eucalypt and the golden ash tree. We will be moving onto our own property, hopefully in the next 12 months, and I would dearly love to grow some of these trees to plant when we move. I will pay all postage of course. Many thanks. Look forward to hearing from you soon!

S Kelleher,

Bligh St, MILLFIELD 2325.

Dear Grass Roots,

I have recently moved to **RAVENSTHORPE** in southern Western Australia. I'd like to **MAKE CONTACTS** with other greenies in the area, especially lesbian greenies. We have such wonderful flora and fauna biodiversity here, but not much in the way of human diversity. Being a lesbian in the wheat belt is a rare thing. I'd like to extend a hand (letter) out to other lesbians so we can communicate and break isolation from one another. I just love your magazine, so full of wonderful stories, suggestions and Feedback. Keep up the great work.

Terri,

**PO Box 292, RAVENSTHORPE 6346.
greenwitch007@yahoo.com**

Dear Grass Roots,

My daughter gave me a subscription to GR for my birthday, and what a wonderful gift this has been. When I receive my mag, I devour all the articles and contributions with a great deal of interest and spiritual connection. Now that our children have grown up, my husband and I are planning to build a basic cottage on our country property. We look forward to the opportunity to realise one of our lifelong dreams. The property does not have electricity, so we are looking at alternative sources to provide us with a level of comfort and convenience. With this in mind, I would like to hear from any readers who may know where I can obtain a **HAND-OPERATED CLOTHES WRINGER**. Also, a couple of years ago I saw a program on television about a wind-up radio, it had the same mechanism as a clock and from what I recall could run for a couple of hours before requiring a rewind. Would any reader know of this product? Thanks for providing so much enjoyable reading to so many people.

**Marylyn Simpson,
10 Carew St, DEE WHY
2099.**



To Dear Grass Roots Readers,

I need some ideas or suggestions as to how to fill a **VERY LARGE WATER TANK**. There is no shed nearby for run-off and I want the rain water to go in, in large amounts, somehow.

Thanks for all the help with my last letter hint! If you have dandruff try getting your hair dyed at the hairdresser – this has worked for me.

**S Ingersoll,
175 Ungala Rd, BLACKSMITHS 2281.**

FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Hi Everyone,

For anyone out there who, like me, has **FIBROMYALGIA**, there is an excellent site on the internet. I sifted through a lot of rubbish before I found this, and more since. It's presented by a doctor who has FMS. The address is: www.sover.net/~devstar. If, like me, you are tired of patronising rhetoric, this is the place to go for sensible information. I have an excellent GP who advised me against using guaifenesin, with very good reasons. However, apart from that, the info is great. Be prepared for a lot of reading. Education is our best defence.

**Robin Blesing,
PO Box 331, VICTOR HARBOR 5211.**

Dear GR Readers,

I really have had a lot of trouble obtaining plans or having a pump made. Can anyone help me find the plans for **BUILDING A PLATYPUS PUMP?** Or can anyone build me one? I will pay for the cost of course. I don't know if it goes by another name, but it is a pump working on a diaphragm method (I think), does not require fuel etc.

Also, anyone wishing to WWOOF at my place? It's a small property, nearly surrounded by crown land (very pretty). Only have a small separate dwelling for accommodation, maybe two people, no cats, nice friendly dog okay. I am a positive happy person, don't push any religious barrows. I do not take drugs, nearly vegetarian and respect same. It is a really beautiful place. Surrounding this area are many waterfalls and awe inspiring places to visit. I am happy to take one or two persons on a tour (very proud of the area!) if working and staying for week. Anyone who is able to live on their own (bring caravan?) in privacy, likes their own company and is looking for a place to stay would also work out, in exchange for fair amount of work around the place. It's messy, needs TLC, but inside the accommodation is clean, light and kind on the senses. I am not looking for a companion, or partner in life. I am really happy here and love the life this place is giving me. Maybe someone would like a place to share with a good friend (me!). I like the climate here, not too hot and not too cold, although I was told it was cold here re snow. Even though it snowed last year, I found it a different cold and quite an even climate, but that is what suits me and everyone is different. Life is good, especially when you find the GR life!



**Marie,
Box 1002, ARMIDALE 2350.**

Dear Grass Roots,

Can anyone help me with information on buying a **CAMPER VAN THAT RUNS ON VEGETABLE OIL?** Since I am not mechanically minded I am hoping to find out where in Tasmania I could get the conversion done and what kind of limitations and problems I might expect.

COMMUNITY LIVING appeals to me (female 55 years) and I wondered if I could hear from or visit anyone in Tasmania who has any experience or knows how to go about setting up a rural commune.

**Britt Penhallow,
PO Box 16, BICHENO 7215.**

Dear Grass Roots,

I have tried unsuccessfully to buy an '**EXERCISE BODY SHAPER**' and it seems it isn't sold here anymore. I used my one until the ropes frayed away. It is simply ropes attached to pulleys and is hooked up to a door knob or similar thing and worked by lying on one's back and, with hands and feet adjusted at ends of ropes, manipulating arms and legs in coordination. I would be very grateful if there is someone that still has one to sell or lend me so as I can take a copy and try to assemble one myself.

Also, has anyone got **NEW GUINEA CLIMBING BEAN** seeds available?

**Marguerite Leslie,
12 Kristy Crt, MORAYFIELD 4506.**

Dear Grass Roots,

How are you all going? I am looking for someone who has or has seen the garden tool called the **GUNDAROO TILLER**. Or, Ho-Min [?] the Asian hand cultivator. I have also sent some poor man's bean seed and some cooker beans to PO Box 633, Merredin 6415, but I do not know if they have received the seed. They said they would pay postage, but I have not received any.

**Jack,
No 4 Cannon St, TOOWOOOMBA 4350.**

Dear GR,

I was stunned to read that the level of '**FLUORIDE IN MY LOCAL WATER**' is 1 pp thousand (1 ml/litre). I had always thought that the level was 1 ppm. In Pfeiffer's 1978 book, he cites evidence that levels higher than 1 ppm are known to have detrimental effects. He writes that 'Even fluoride advocates agree that 2 ppm is toxic after twenty or fifty years'. Its chief benefit lies in preventing tooth decay during their growing period. It is suggested that adults no longer need such a constant input. He claims that calcium fluoride rather than sodium fluoride or sodium silico fluoride should be used. Further investigation using more up-to-date sources do nothing to negate these claims. Prozac is a fluoride compound - fluoroxetine hydrochloride. Initial tests done before fluoride was introduced were carried out using calcium fluoride, but sodium fluoride is a waste product of the aluminium industry and its only use before that time was as rat poison. I'm sure I'm going over well worn territory for many, but the use of sodium fluoride is now illegal in Sweden; no fluorides are now used in German water and none ever were used in the water of the French. Perhaps it is time for fluoridated parts of Australia to think again. Fluoride is involved in the aging processes. It can also suppress thyroid action and lead to hormone imbalance.

The way the body processes natural sources and unnatural ones is different. Goat's milk, tea, juniper berries, rice and many natural foods can supply all the fluoride we need in a form that need have no side effects.

**MC,
16 Rose Pde, 2519.**

Dear Grass Roots,

I always enjoy your magazine and have done so for some years now. I find it contains a wealth of information from people who are more than willing to share their thoughts and ideas. I have been using Lux soap flakes and electric soda to make my own laundry washing liquid for years. Now I am hoping someone can help me with a recipe for **LIQUID HAND WASH**. I have searched in vain, and the laundry liquid I use does not lather as well as I would like, so if anyone can help me please reply. I am happy to share my laundry recipe with those interested.



**Greg Neale,
PO Box 208, TOORADIN 3980.**

Dear GRs,

I was wondering if there were any readers out there that know anything about miniature pigs. Sadly, our pet pig recently died. We were told when we bought him he was a miniature, but surprise, surprise, he just kept growing, but we loved him anyway. Is there really such a thing as a **TRUE MINIATURE PIG** and are any available in WA? Thank you and regards to you all.

**Deborah Bridle,
RMB 1280, NOGGERUP 6225.
dbridle@starday.com.au**

FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear Grass Roots,

I'm writing in response to the article in your magazine on Alternative Education. I withdrew my children from school last year to **HOME TEACH** them. It has been rewarding yet demanding. My reasons were varied, though mostly due to the fact that my son had completed two years of grade one and still couldn't read.



I enrolled them in the Australian Christian Academy in Brendale, Qld. The curriculum is already prepared and is preschool to year twelve inclusive, and is biblically based. I don't have government permission to do so, although the Academy advises you how to handle things if you run into problems with the Education Department. Seven of my 10 children are now enrolled. I'm a sole parent now and some days it is hard, however, I would never send them back to school. I believe it is my God-given responsibility to raise them, not to hand that responsibility over to someone else for six hours a day. I'd love to write to other home schooling families or anyone who cares to write.

**Karen Freeman,
PO Box 657, ASHGROVE 4060.**

Dear Grass Roots,

Would **LAUREL LAMPERD** be interested in contacting me? Your poem was in GR137.

**Dot Grace,
26 Gloria St, STH GOLDEN BEACH 2483.**

Dear Readers,

I have so many problems. They make me feel frustrated, sometimes desperate. Recently I bought a farm. I still live in the city. The idea was to keep my job of 30 years for the next two to three years. By that time I should have enough money to build a nice house on the farm. But the boss just told us that he is selling the business. That means that I will probably have to go to the farm with not much money. So, I will appreciate it if anyone could help with information and ideas about buying/building a house, solar power, water system, septic tank and fencing for as little money as possible. I intend to have different farm animals: cattle, horses, dogs, pigs, goats etc. Any information about them would be helpful.

People here in the city have not been very helpful. Because I am a 61 year old man, many told me: 'You are too old to live on a farm'. But it has been my dream. By buying the farm I fulfilled the first part of my dreams and visions, God's will. Now is the time to fulfil the second one. They also say: 'You cannot live alone there'. I do not know that. But I do know that loneliness, too, is one of my problems, the kind of loneliness that only a woman could help. Correspondence could be solution. So, I would like to hear also from female readers, any race, any marital status, any age (20s - 60s), particularly if you love farm animals, nature, bush, naturalness and feel emotionally bonded to, with intimate dreams about; farm life.

I also welcome any ideas about what can be **DONE ON A FARM** that could be **PROFITABLE, USEFUL AND PLEASURABLE**. My farm is: 326 acres, 60 kilometres from Port Macquarie, forested mountain with very beautiful secluded valleys, two clear creeks and rainforest. To me, it looks like a paradise.

People should help one another. Some problems could be solved only by working together with other people. By ourselves we are weak, but together we are strong and can do and have what individually we have not. For example, if a few of us pool our resources together we get a few times stronger. It is a pity that many people do not use it.

**Voya,
PO Box 513, AUBURN 2144.
Ph/Fax: 02-9832-9923.**

Dear Grass Roots,

We are **SEEKING LIKE-MINDED PEOPLE**. We have been

on our property, 'Narimba', for nearly three years. It is 20 kilometres west of Narrandera, NSW and is 1700 hectares. It is now a refuge for red and grey kangaroos and several species of terrestrial and aquatic birds, due to a 200 hectare wetland area. There are large areas of varied native timber, so the potential for reintroduction of local native Australian flora and fauna is great. We have started to farm broadacre grain crops organically and want to learn about vegetable cropping.

We are keen to connect with others who are able to advise about those subjects, plus permaculture, nature conservation, funding and ecotourism, or anyone who may be able to provide some labour for a couple of days.

We also have a portion of 330 hectares to sell, but will do so only to like-minded people with the same concepts as ours, for obvious reasons. It has a four bedroom house which is one kilometre from the Sturt Highway, a water license for 202 megalitres from the creek, and a good mix of arable land with native timber.

Please, if you share the same visions, can advise, help, or are interested, contact:

**Mark & Susie Rowe,
Ph: 02-6959-6269, fax: 02-6959-6288
email: msrowe@bigpond.com**

Dear GR,

I have a couple of questions readers may be able to help with. I would like to know how to build a **GREYWATER RECYCLING SYSTEM** using reedbeds and also how to make a **MEAT AND FISH SMOKER** out of an old refrigerator.

**Ken McDonald,
PO Box 4, ASHFORD 2361.**

Dear GR,

Please help! Have 400 citrus trees. Need information on **ORGANIC GROWING**. Interested in contact with other organic farms.

**Debbie Gear
411 Mitchell Rd, MT MARIA 4674.**
Try contacting **ORGAA (Organic Retailers and Growers Association Australia): PO Box 12852, A'Beckett St PO, Melbourne 3000. Ph: 03-9737-9799.**

Dear GR,

I have read GR on and off for many years and had almost forgotten just what an inspiring little gem it is. As I read an old issue (Dec 98/Jan 99), I came across a letter by Possum Jack, who met **THE GIRL OF HIS DREAMS** through GR to share the true passions of life. I have a great empathy with Possum Jack's story of loneliness. I too feel life is passing me by without someone to share one another's intimate company and all the other pure earthly passions with Mother Nature.

I am 43, self-employed, with a lifestyle so unique it is just bliss to wake up every day on the shores of Tasmania's beautiful coastline. But there is always something missing.

I suppose I am a bit of an odd bod though, a nonreligious, non-New Age, nondrinking, nonsmoking, semi-retired, lean, vegan greenie. With no interest in having kids of my own and having never developed the knack of meeting women.

Three years ago, under advice, I went to the city to invest money in a block of flats. As I walked around with my chest out pretending to be some bigwig in investment, I suddenly stopped in my tracks and realised that this was not me. So I bought myself a guitar instead and now teach myself classical. At the same time I took up surfing and now I am right into it and loving it.

After a severe blow with a relationship, my objective in life now is to purchase some coastal acreage and make a fresh start all over again; growing my organic vegies and hoping that one day some of Possum Jack's luck may come my way.

**Jimbo,
PO Box 389, ST HELENS 7216.**

Growing Bananas

by Susan Hands, Innisfail, Qld.



Commercial growers bag the bunches of fruit to prevent spotting and bird/bat damage. It's a sensible precaution for backyard growers as well.

Even a small backyard has space for a banana plant or two. They are tall, rhizomatous perennials which flourish in warm, moist, sheltered conditions. The short underground rhizome grows horizontally but slowly; aerial shoots (suckers) arise from lateral buds on the rhizome.

Cultivars take six to twelve months from planting to bunch emergence, depending on temperature and water. Irrigation reduces the time and the reduction is cumulative, that is, more pronounced in the second and third ratoon. The period from bunch emergence to bunch harvest is 100 - 120 days in the tropics. From transplanting of suckers to fruiting can take about two years.

All commercial fruit growers bag their bananas, placing a bag over the

whole bunch to protect the fruit from marking/spotting which reduces their sale value. The bags also help against flying foxes and birds. Fruit eating birds simply adore bananas, they will even fly into your house and peck at ripe bananas.

To plant your banana - on a non-commercial basis - simply take a sucker (aerial shoot) off a mature, vigorous plant that is disease free. Dig your hole and place the sucker firmly into the ground. Water and mulch well. Years ago people used blady grass to mulch their bananas; you can still use blady grass today, however, cane tops are an excellent mulch and readily obtainable in our area.

To ensure continuous production leave two or three suckers on each

stem so you can transplant one in summer and one in winter. However, if you are not irrigating your bananas you should regularly desucker them to obtain the best and fullest bunch.

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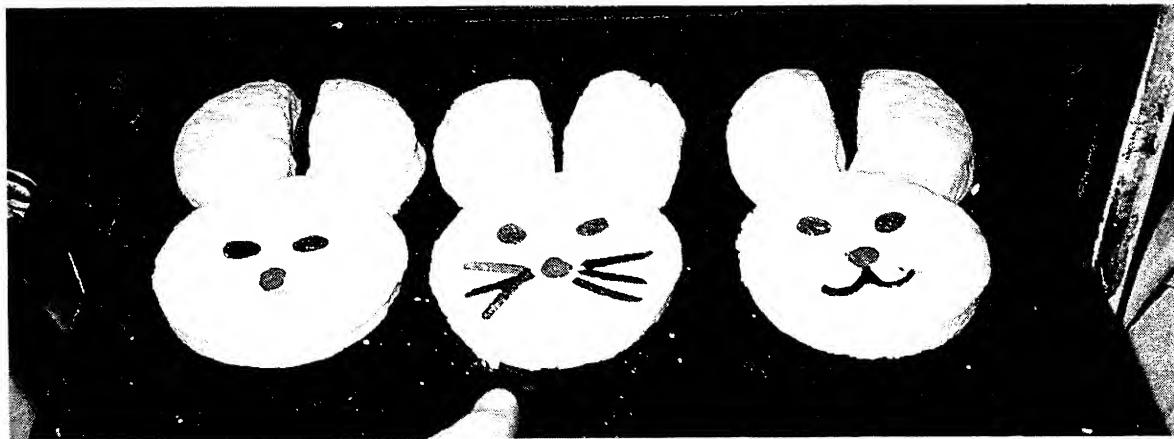
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Easter Bunny Scones

by Heather Kozak, Dellicknora, Vic.



This recipe is from my childhood. My mum made these, and hot cross buns, every Easter. I now make them for my own children (and sneak a few for myself). They are a nice alternative for little kids who aren't particularly partial to your spicy homemade hot cross buns, and those who are chock-a-block with chocolate.

2 cups SR flour
2 tbsp caster sugar
pinch of salt
30 g butter
½ cup powdered milk
½ cup water
sultanas, currants, slivered almonds,
ace cherries, liquorice and pale pink
ing

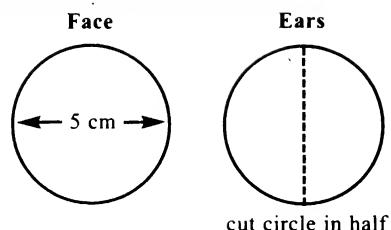
Sift the flour, sugar and salt into a bowl and rub in butter. Combine milk with water and pour into a hole dug in

the dry ingredients. Mix lightly with a knife to a soft dough, knead gently and press out with fingers to about a centimetre thickness.

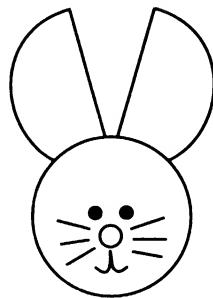
Cut out five-centimetre circles, then cut half the circles in half and shape them into rabbit ears. Press two ears to each whole scone, using milk to help them to stick.

Give the rabbit heads faces by pressing in currants or sultanas for eyes, half a cherry or a triangle cut from a liquorice strap for the nose, and slivered almonds or liquorice or peanuts sliced lengthwise for the whiskers.

Bake in a hot oven for 10 minutes, or until just golden brown. When they are cool, ice the centre of the ears with pale pink icing. Makes about seven bunny faces.



The Finished Bunny



The logo for PAWS IN PRINT BOOKSTORE is centered on a white background. It features a black silhouette of a tree with two trunks and three distinct canopy sections. Above the tree, the words "PAWS IN PRINT" are written in a large, bold, black, sans-serif font. Below the tree, the words "BOOKSTORE" are written in a slightly smaller, bold, black, sans-serif font. To the left of the tree, there is a vertical list of twelve black five-pointed stars. To the right of the tree, there is a horizontal list of twelve black five-pointed stars. Below the tree, the text "specialising in books on" is written in a cursive, italicized black font. Underneath that, the text "DOGS, GOATS, LLAMAS, POULTRY," is written in a bold black font. Below that, the text "RABBITS, HERBS, AND MORE." is written in a bold black font. At the bottom of the logo, there is a block of text in a black, sans-serif font: "For a mail order catalogue", "send 2x45c stamps to", "PO Box 3168, Wheelers Hill, 3150", "Ph: 03-9795-9158 or 03-9580-7441", "www.pawsinprint.com.au", and "Brookland Crt, Mulgrave 3170".

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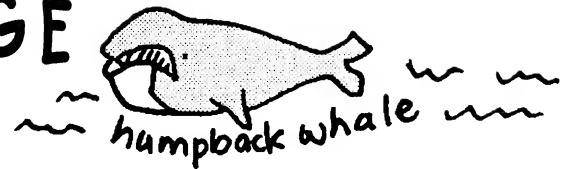
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KIDS PAGE



Whales and dolphins are fascinating and much-loved creatures of the sea. They belong to the same group of marine mammals called Cetacea. There are over 70 species of Cetacea in the world's oceans. Some of these can be seen in the wild in Australian waters, including humpback whales, grey whales, bottlenose dolphins and striped dolphins.

Did You Know?

★ Cetacea are divided into two main groups. One group is the baleen whales (distinguished by baleen plates instead of teeth) and these include humpback whales, grey whales and minke whales. The other group is the toothed whales and they include sperm whales, dolphins and porpoises.

★ The killer whale is actually the largest member of the dolphin family.

★ Dolphins swallow fish whole despite their many teeth - they use these just to grasp prey.

★ The bottlenose dolphin is second only to humans in the ratio of brain to body size.

★ Some dolphins can jump as high as 6 metres out of the water.

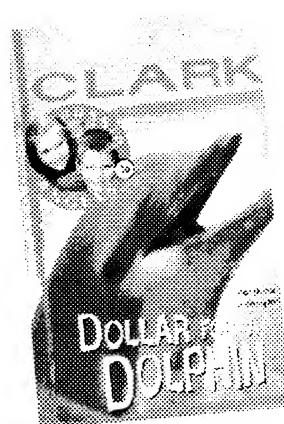
★ The biggest whale is the blue whale which grows to about 29 metres long and has no predators except humans.

★ Groups of whales and groups of dolphins are called pods.

BOOK REVIEW

Dollar for a Dolphin

By Margaret Clark



This is the new book in the *Aussie Angels* series for young readers (middle primary+). These books aim to interest readers in a range of ecological and social issues while engaging them in action-packed adventure stories. *Dollar for a Dolphin* involves school children saving both a pod of dolphins and missing funds.

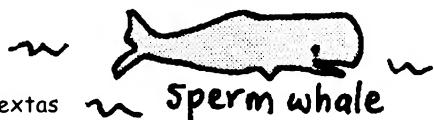
P/b, Mark Macleod Books/Hodder Headline,
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Origami Whale

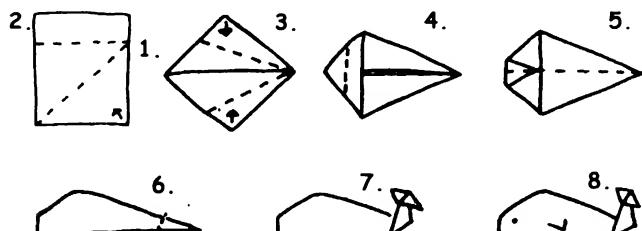
Make yourself an origami pet whale.

You will need

- ★ A4 paper
- ★ scissors
- ★ pencils or textas



1. Shape a square piece of paper by folding one corner over to the other side and fold.
2. Cut off remaining edge.
3. Fold two opposite sides over so they meet at the centre fold.
4. Fold the tip over to just meet the centre folds.
5. Fold the piece in half along the central axis.
6. Fold the tail up.
7. Make a cut through the end of the fold in the tail. Fold the edges of the tail outwards.
8. Draw eyes, fins etc.



Global Whale Sanctuary

Most whales that are targeted by commercial whalers are actually endangered or protected species. Greenpeace wants to implement a series of regional sanctuaries for whales and ultimately a global whale sanctuary. For more information and ways to help this campaign contact Greenpeace, GPO Box 3307, SYDNEY 2001. Ph: 02-9261-4666.

Ha Ha Ha

Why did the dolphin blush?
Because the sea weed.



IN THE KITCHEN

Tasty, nutritious and easily digested, bananas are one of the world's oldest cultivated plants. Given a suitable tropical climate, or microclimate in temperate regions, you can have a plot producing year round. Susan Hands from Innisfail shares some advice and recipes for this most versatile fruit.

Bananas are a good source of vitamin C, are high in potassium and contain useful amounts of fibre and iron. Their soft, easily digestible flesh makes them an ideal first fruit to offer infants.

Several varieties are grown commercially, the main one being the Cavendish. The smaller, sweeter Lady Fingers are popular, but more expensive and less frequently available, especially in southern Australia. Plantains are a cooking variety only and should not be eaten raw. There is a pink-fleshed variety (name unknown), with its own distinctive flavour, sometimes available.

Bananas are usually picked green and allowed to ripen at a controlled temperature. Once you have bought them, they ripen more quickly in warmer weather. Choose firm plump fruit free of blemishes. Green skin indicates unripe fruit, yellow is ripe, and yellow flecked with brown is considered by many to be at its peak as the flesh becomes sweeter with increasing ripeness. Ripe fruit may be wrapped in newspaper and stored in the refrigerator for a few days. The skin will blacken but the flesh remains unchanged for about five days, depending on stage of ripeness when refrigerated.

Bananas can be eaten raw or cooked in a number of different ways. Peeled and/or sliced fruit can be brushed with lemon juice to prevent discolouration for a short time. For longer storage bananas can be mashed with lemon juice and frozen, or cut into slices, dipped in lemon juice and dried.

BANANA HORS D'OEUVRE

2 large firm but ripe bananas
1/2 cup lemon juice
90 g cream cheese
1/2 cup finely chopped nuts

Peel bananas and cut into bite-size pieces. Marinate in lemon juice for 1 hour, turning to ensure all sides are marinated. Drain, spread with cream cheese and roll in nuts.

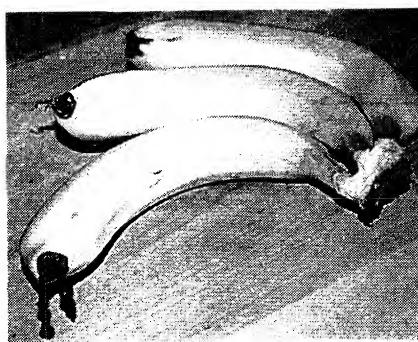
BANANA MARMALADE

Peel and slice 10 medium sized bananas, add 1 kg sugar and juice of 2 large lemons. Place in a casserole dish and leave for 1 hour. Turn into saucepan or preserving pan and bring gently to boil, stirring constantly. It will thicken quickly. Test by dropping a little on a plate.

BOTTLED BANANAS

1 1/2 cups sugar
1 cup water
2 tbsp lemon juice
1/4 tsp salt
6 - 8 bananas

Dissolve sugar in water and bring to boil. Stir in lemon juice and salt. Peel bananas and slice into rounds or lengths, depending on your preference. Place in boiling syrup and cook uncovered 5 - 7 minutes. Do not allow bananas to disintegrate. Place in sterilised jars until completely filled.



BANANA BUTTER

4 ripe bananas, mashed
2/3 cup sugar
3 eggs
1/2 cup orange juice
1/4 cup lemon juice
90 g butter
1 tbsp grated lemon rind

Blend all ingredients and place in top part of double boiler. Stand saucepan over simmering water and stir until mixture thickly coats the back of a wooden spoon. Pour into hot sterilised jars. Makes about 3 1/2 cups.

BANANA CAKE

120 g butter
1 egg
1 1/2 cups SR Flour
1/2 cup brown sugar
3 mashed bananas
3/4 tsp bicarb soda

Beat butter and sugar, add egg, beat well. Add bananas, beat well. Sift flour and soda together. Sift into mixture. Bake in moderate oven for 25 minutes.

CARAMEL BANANA PUDDING

4 bananas
1 tbsp butter
1 cup brown sugar
1 egg
1/2 cup milk
1 cup SR flour
brown sugar for sprinkling.

Grease a tart dish with butter and sprinkle with brown sugar. Line dish with sliced bananas. Cream butter and brown sugar, add egg. Add sifted flour and milk alternately. Pour carefully into dish. Bake in a moderate oven 30 - 40 minutes.

BANANA FRITTERS

1 cup plain flour
1 egg
1/2 cup milk
4 ripe bananas
1 lemon
sugar

Sift flour, add egg, milk, and banana mashed in lemon to make a batter. In a reasonably hot pan, fry spoonfuls of mixture until golden. Serve the pancakes with a sprinkle of lemon and sugar or with more mashed banana.

BANANA & PINEAPPLE JAM

1 large pineapple
6 bananas
1 kg sugar
Vitimise pineapple. Slice bananas. Place in large saucepan and simmer until tender. Add sugar, boil until thick. Always stir as it easily sticks. Jam will darken when cooked. Bottle and seal.

The Scrumptious Solanacea

by Lyn Armanasco, Clunes, NSW.

I love homegrown tomatoes. Nothing you can buy in the supermarket comes near the taste and aroma. I've planted and nurtured all sorts from the tiny red to the Black Russian. But there are only so many salads and tomato sandwiches you can eat in one season, so I cook with them too. I first tried the huevos rancheros in America back in the 80s and then spent ages trying to re-create it at home. The calzone was from Malta. I think I'm close to the originals with both, but it doesn't matter because they're both delicious as are. The cannelloni just came about when my children were in single digits and loved pasta of any denomination. This is still one of their most requested meals when we all get together. They both have vegetarian leanings now and I have even served this as the Christmas lunch, much to the relief of turkeys throughout Oz.

Homegrown tomatoes are always best, but if you fancy cooking any of these out of season you can substitute tinned tomatoes in the huevos rancheros and the cannelloni. In fact, the juice in the tins is an added bonus, but please use a good brand, preferably Australian owned and produced. For the calzone, fresh is required so the supermarket varieties will have to be used when tomatoes are out of season in your garden.

HUEVOS RANCHEROS

3 tbsp olive oil
1 onion, chopped
1 green pepper, though any colour that appeals is fine
2 cloves garlic, minced
½ tsp cumin
½ tsp oregano
2 cups of tomatoes, peeled and chopped or 2 tins and juice
6 eggs
½ cup grated cheese, mozzarella, cheddar, or whatever is in the fridge
chilli – use what you've got or prefer. Fresh, use 2; dried, use about 2 tsp; minced chilli (in jars at the supermarket), use a good dollop. And remember, if you love chilli, add more, if you

don't, add less; and if you hate chilli, this recipe is not for you.

Fry the onions, pepper and garlic in the oil for 5 minutes. Add cumin, oregano, chilli and tomatoes and simmer for 10 minutes. Pour into shallow baking dish. Gently break the eggs into the sauce, trying to keep them whole. Sprinkle the cheese over the eggs and bake in moderate oven for 15 to 20 minutes until the eggs are set. Using a good sized spoon, scoop up eggs with lots of sauce around them and serve. I generally find 2 eggs per person is enough, but it depends on whether it's for lunch or a hearty evening meal. Or you can serve it in the traditional way – for breakfast, though the thought of chilli for brekky does nothing for me.

CALZONE

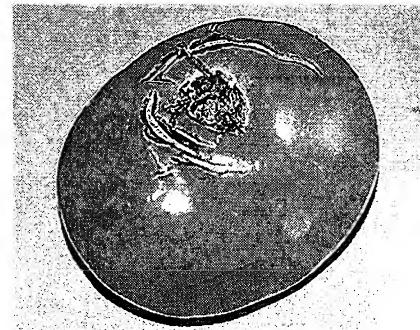
Dough

1 packet of dry yeast
1 cup warm water
1 tsp sugar
2 cups flour
pinch of salt
¼ cup olive oil

Combine yeast, water, sugar and 1 cup of flour. Let the mixture froth for 10 minutes and stir in remaining flour, salt and oil. Mix well to stiff dough. You may need more flour or water – dough making is not an exact science. On a floured board knead dough for 5 minutes until smooth. Place in a clean bowl, cover and stand in a warm place till double the bulk – about an hour.

Filling

½ cup olive oil
1 med onion, chopped
1 red or green pepper, seeded and chopped
1 small eggplant, chopped
1 large or 2 small tomatoes, chopped
1 small zucchini, chopped, or any other veg that takes your fancy
fresh herbs, about 1 – 2 tbsp. I like basil, but oregano, thyme and even sage are good.
1 cup parmesan, grated
1 tbsp cheddar, grated



1 egg, beaten

Heat the oil in a frypan. Add the onion, garlic and vegetables, fry for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Remove from heat and add cheeses, herbs and black pepper. Mix well. When the dough has risen punch it down and knead for 2 minutes. Roll into a rectangle approximately 25 x 38 cm. Heap the filling in the centre. Lift and fold the sides over the centre and pinch together, rather like a giant pastie. Tuck both ends underneath to form a sealed package. Cover with a cloth and let it rise for 30 – 40 minutes. Score the top with a knife to allow steam to escape, brush with beaten egg and bake for half an hour in 200° C oven. Serve warm or cold in thick slices.

CANNELLONI

1 pkt cannelloni shells
1 large tub of ricotta or cottage cheese

1 bunch spinach
6 spring onions, chopped
1 clove garlic, minced
pepper and salt

Steam spinach, cool and chop. Mix everything together and, with clean hands, stuff it in the cannelloni shells. Pack into casserole dish in layers.

Sauce

2 cups tomatoes, peeled and chopped, or 2 tins and juice
1 onion, chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
lots of basil
black pepper

Cook everything together in a frypan until mushy, about 10 – 15 minutes. If tomatoes aren't juicy enough,

add some water and a little tomato paste. This sauce needs to be quite sloppy. Pour it over the cannelloni and bake covered for half an hour in medium oven. This dish freezes well and I used to bake lots and freeze small amounts so the kids could always warm some up when they were at the 'I'm going to die if I don't get some food' stage of adolescence.

Having just moved to a new state and beginning the process of house building, Steve and I are vegie-gardenless at present. Very depressing, as the thought of no homegrown tomatoes looms ahead. Spare a thought for us as you munch your way through your homegrown produce and maybe throw some in a pot to try these recipes. Enjoy.

PESTICIDES AND TEA



Thirty-one pesticides are regularly used on tea crops and many, particularly insecticides, are applied right up until the tea is ready for harvesting. In addition to insecticides, other pesticides include fungicides, nematocides and herbicides. The spraying often takes place while women are working in the fields. Not only are the female pickers exposed to poisons, but also there is a high chance that teas come to us laced with residues as there is not sufficient time for rain to remove them, or for the normal process of photodegeneration to occur. It's best to buy organic tea and contact the Ministry of Health to request that teas be tested for pesticide residues. Write to your favourite tea company and ask them to grow their product organically.



NATURAL APPEAL

Data released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics shows that the use of herbs and other natural medicines has increased dramatically. As a percentage of total medication sales, in the five years to 1995 their use has increased from 3 to 35 percent, 75 percent of these being vitamin and mineral supplements.

TOMATO PURÉE

The Taste Of Summer

by Sweet Alice, Hanwood, NSW.

I have always been a country girl and we have done our best over the years to be self-sufficient, growing organic foods and also preserving those foods for the off season. Heavy frosts and below zero temperatures during winter destroy our vegetable garden, and we choose not to use hot-houses, so it is both necessary and very enjoyable to preserve food. The children have always been included in the fun of planting, hoeing, watering, harvesting, preparing and preserving. They are now all happy competent young adults living the same country lifestyle on the land. We get together every week, but when it's time for preserving it's all hands on.

It is now autumn and tomatoes will soon be hard to come by. I will tell you what we do with our tomatoes when they are ripe and plentiful, around early February, so we can enjoy them during the tomatoless winter.

Obtain large beer bottles, not the screw-top type. Bottle caps and a small device to cap and seal bottles can be obtained at any large hardware store that stocks equipment for brewing. Wash your bottles well.

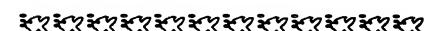
Wash and roughly cut up tomatoes and crush to a purée. This can be done using a hand-turned purée sieve. The seeds and skins are not included. Dry your seeds out in the sun and use to

replant next season.

Pour tomato purée into prepared bottles, but it is most important to only fill to within about five centimetres of the top. This empty space allows the sauce to come to a high temperature during boiling, without breakage. Firmly cap all your bottles.

Place a small hessian bag or a few old tea towels on the base of a very large saucepan. Lie bottles in saucepan and cover with water. Bring slowly to the boil and allow to simmer for about an hour.

We have prepared our tomato purée this way for many years without fail. Enough is stored to last until next season. Because we do large quantities we boil our bottles in a large drum over a dug-out campfire. Take care not to allow the heat to become too intense or your bottles will start to explode, but, with patience, you too can have your pantry stocked all winter with the fruits of summer.



WATER SAVINGS

Much of the fresh water being used today is to grow feed for cattle, and 70 percent of water is used in agriculture. With a growing world population and water scarcity, the issue of meat consumption will have to be debated.

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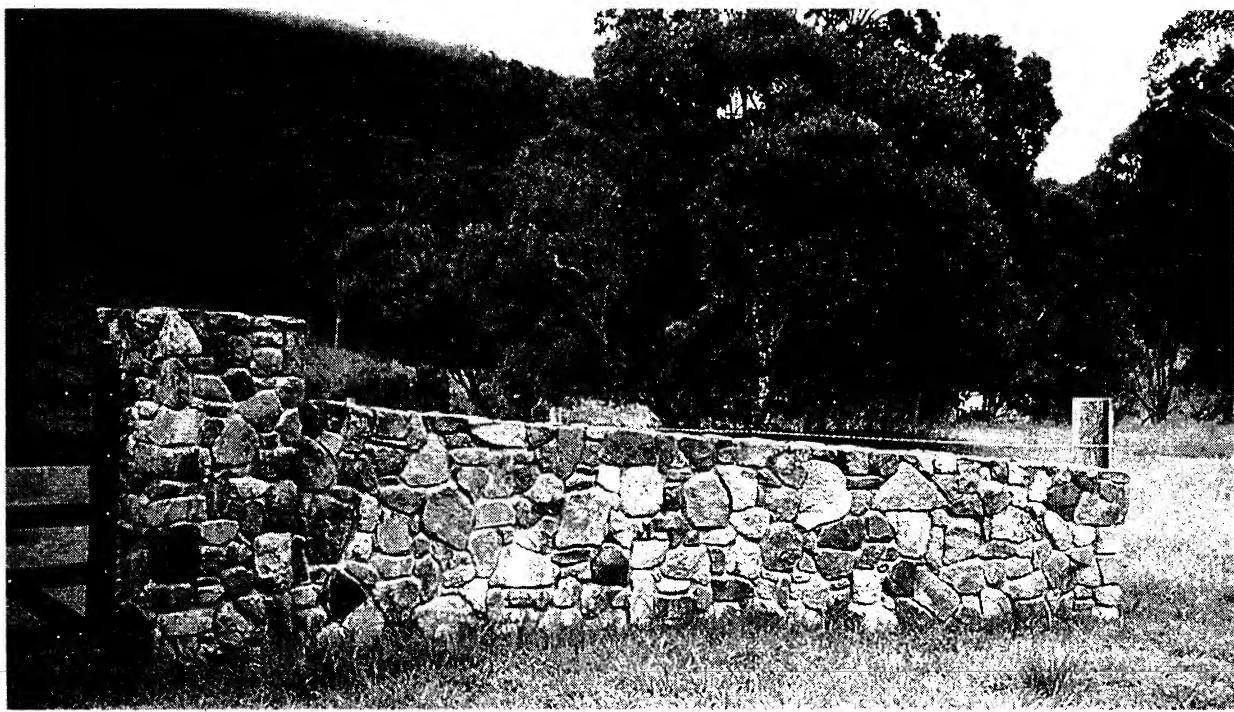
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STONE PILLARS AND GATEWAYS

by A S Duncan, Canungra, Qld.



Most of us appreciate the commanding presence of a stone entryway. Herein I will divulge simple instructions which will enable you to construct yours.

FOOTINGS

A reasonable dimension for pillars up to two metres high is 700 mm sq. Make an excavation 800 mm sq by 600 mm deep. Square these holes off each other with a string line and builders' square. Fabricate and install a steel mesh 'cage' with a 12 mm rod set in the centre extending to the full height of the pillars which can be trimmed to accommodate capstone(s). When pouring the concrete leave a rough finish for efficacy in adhesion. Use a dumpy or water level to bring footings to a level for a reference to finishing height. To attach walls to your pillars follow the same procedure with footings; construct pillars first (be sure to infix lateral 12 mm rods in footings and pillars). Also install vertical rods in wall footings at 600 mm intervals. On 700 mm sq pillars measure in

100 mm each side for a 500 mm wall for depth and dimensional enhancement of your structure. Ensure pillars are tied to walls with steel rods.

STONE SELECTION

Here the development of a discerning eye simplifies your task.

Right Angles

Obviously your first choice. For two pillars two metres high you require 100 right angle stones of 160 – 200 mm profile, plus a few larger pieces if possible (for a great look), and a few more to account for breakages. I suggest targeting 200 as you will surely use some 'blocky' types to fill closure here and there. Be warned to use them frugally lest you 'spend' them all too early.

Other Shapes

Triangles big and small are next. Small triangles are needed to create set-ups and fill awkward closures. Larger triangles will help you 'weave' an interesting pattern (the essence of good stonework). Any other shapes will do

to obtain your quota – squares with one corner missing, blunt-nose triangles. The varying shapes help create the magic. Now, after cleaning them, lay stones out in these respective groups with their best face up.

GETTING STARTED

Practise a little with your weave by laying stones out on the ground, experiment with shapes. Having done this, prepare your mortar – four sand to one cement. Always start the four corners simultaneously and keep moving around as you rise. Take both pillars up together for balance and compatibility – they will be different but the same. With natural stone (not cut by machine) there are always imperfections.

When plumbing your corner stones on two faces you will fiddle about a great deal. Sit them in place without mortar, propping with chips to plumb if necessary, and marking with bright crayon where to chip if needed. This will surely test your skill and patience.



Stone pillars make an impressive entrance to any property and are within the ability of many amateur stonemasons.

However, it is the defining aspect of pillar construction.

Learn to exploit your mean average. Stand back and see the whole picture; it looks very different from three to six metres distance. Humour your perpendicular from 10 – 20 mm, maintaining a true line, ensuring the most part of that stone is on that true line. I use a 1200 mm level up to two metres without problems.

Above all, be patient. Try to create a nice weave, enjoy your work and marvel at how you achieve a beautiful picture with shapes. Keep your joints broken, avoiding continuous lines anywhere (particularly lateral joints as they weaken your structure and look terrible). Maintain, as much as possible, a 9 – 12 mm joint and rake them 20 mm or so, cleaning the inside edge of stones with a stiff brush and damp sponge.

ANOTHER STYLE

The aforementioned notes refer to a style known as 'fine pointed'. The other mode I would like to note is 'jointless jamming', where all the mortar is concealed. The stones are tightly jammed together using chinks to fill any gaps. Whilst I concede that it's a great look, it's not as structurally sound as fine pointed. Any entity featured in a metaphor generally attains that status by way of fact. Pillars must have strength, particularly with swinging gates attached. If jointless jamming is your preferred style, a couple of tips for

added strength are: binders – long flatish stones placed on corners are effective; probes – long oblong stones placed at random penetrating into the pillar. Keep the mortar a little wetter than usual so it seeps into every crevice available. This can get a little messy so watch for spillage on facework.

NOTES

When attaching walls to your structure, take up ends (furthest from pillars) first. Run a string line back to finishing height of wall/pillar connection. This will encourage you to use large stones to cap-out, giving that chunky, most desirable look.

Gates

I usually build gate(s) first and use heavy duty hinges. Place gates in aperture perfectly level and plumb. Brace them well and build hinges into pillars, preferably attaching them to centre rod with wire. This is a fail-safe technique, albeit a little constrictive to work with.

Letter Box

I built a letter box into one of my pillars with a large flat stone as a lintel. If using a timber shell, use red cedar or similar for weather resistance.

Electronics

Some clients have requested electric gates and intercoms installed which only requires a little preparation for power source.

Now, hopefully, a few GR's will be inspired to collect stone and create their own silent sentinels.

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www.permaculture.org.au

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So You Want To Live On A Dairy Farm

by June Birkett, Crystal Creek, NSW.

Because of changes in the industry, dairy farming today must be a business as well as a lifestyle. Either way you need to get the best from your cows and from your land.

The two basic dairy breeds today are Friesian and Jersey cows. Of course other breeds such as Guernsey, Ayrshire and Brown Swiss are all excellent milk cows for any small farm. All cattle, properly fed and cared for, are good milk producers. However, let us go back to the two basic breeds of cows and why they are the main choice in dairy farming.

Friesian cows, as most people know, are black and white, big-boned cows; they have big frames and big appetites. They need a large area of pasture and often need large amounts of supplement feed.

Our cows are fed in the dairy bales during milking with a mixture of grain and minerals. Percentage rates are worked out by our grain suppliers, who usually oblige with this information. Friesian cows are known for their large milk production, however this is not always the case if the feed needs of these large cows cannot be maintained. The milk of this breed does not normally have as high a protein fat content as that of a Jersey cow. However, through careful breeding programs the milk has a much higher fat content than in years past and good roughage in the diet brings milk fats up.

Now we will consider the Jersey breed. Everyone loves a Jersey calf, fine-boned with soft brown and white patches and small hooves, they are often compared to deer. Jersey, and Guernsey, cows come from the islands off the coast of England. Known for their hardiness, Jersey cows are a fine breed of cattle and make wonderful house cows.

Not too large to handle and not needing the larger amount of feed that the Friesian cattle do, they have certain

merits of their own. Their milk is high in fat protein. This of course varies in cows, depending on both the breeding program they have been put to and the quality of the feeding regime given to them. On a dairy they also need extra feed of grain and minerals in their troughs when milking, thus pushing up the volume of milk and protein. A dairy is paid for the higher milk fats. We often introduce a Jersey bull across Friesian cows to produce a line of first-cross heifers. These cows are usually bigger than a Jersey though not as large as a Friesian. They are usually a light black colour with white patches. They are high milk producers and the milk is good in fat protein.

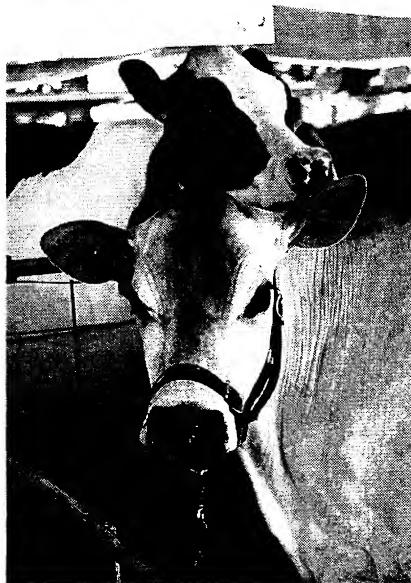
One point that needs to be noted with high and very high producing cows is that on their second and subsequent calves they have a higher risk of milk fever to contend with when calving. Milk fever can hit a cow shortly after calving. Her calcium level drops

dramatically and she may die within a few hours if not given an injection to replace it. This usually stabilises the cow, but she may need a further injection until she can stand on her feet. You may need to contact your vet for these injections.

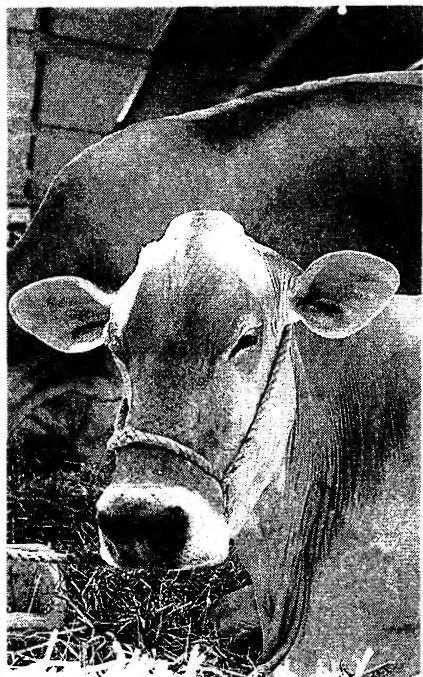
Our dairy breeds about 35 calves a year as a replacement stock for the cows that die or are sold. When the calves are young and are taken from their mothers they are put to this feeding program: Week one – two and a half litres of cows' milk or powdered milk mixture – 170 grams of powder per litre of water. Week two – three and a half litres of milk is now fed for 35 days, or until they eat a kilo of grain per day minimum. From the start the calves should always have access to calf pellets (up to 20 percent of diet) and straw, either in a feeder bin or adlib.

This feed system usually produces fine strong calves with a healthy immune system and that do not easily succumb to dietary problems or weight loss. The secret is to give the calves a good start and keep them going, building body weight, so that at an early age they are developed properly to mate and start producing milk. A side benefit of this program is that being regularly handled from the earliest age they become extremely quiet cows in later years, neither fearing human contact nor becoming kickers when being broken to the dairy bails or milking.

The routine tasks of a dairy involve long days with 4.30am or 5.30am starting, depending on whether or not there is daylight saving. The tanker takes the milk in the morning and the vat must be washed before the milking can begin. The cows are walked from the night paddocks to the bails with the use of a good cattle dog. After the cows are pushed into the milk holding areas the bails are set up to start. The starting button pushed, milking is in progress. The feeding bins are filled before the



The Jersey (front) and black and white Friesian or Holstein (rear) are the main dairy breeds used commercially.



Brown Swiss, large bodied placid animals are recent arrivals to the dairy industry.

cows enter, fresh cows and those newly calved are given extra compared with the amount given to cows closer to being dried off.

Cows of any breed give greater quantities of milk within the first six weeks after calving. When one side of the bails has finished the teats are sprayed and the cows are allowed out into the yard outside. The gates are opened to the paddocks they are to graze that day. Almost all herds have a lead cow and when one cow moves the herd usually follows to the paddocks.

Paddocks are mostly electrically fenced and set up before the cows move out. Feed is always precious and cows are not allowed just to run around the paddocks. Specific areas are only

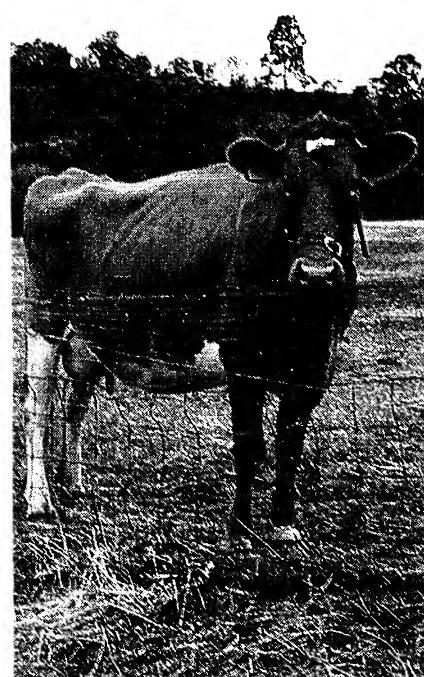
to be grazed on certain allotted days, then locked up until regrowth occurs, which is usually with the help of urea or fertiliser.

Any cows with feet problems are allowed closer paddocks of good feed so that their body weight does not suffer and when their feet recover they are pushed out with the herd. Any cows that are showing on 'heat' (needing to be mated) are put aside in the A1 area and A1'ed later, after milking or, if they are first calvers, put out with the Jersey bull.

When a cow comes within six weeks of her calving date, which is worked out as forty weeks from mating, she is put out in the dry paddock until she calves and then, when calved, put back into the herd. To be productive a cow needs to be calved yearly, but sometimes after a difficult calving she may have trouble going back into calf. We allow the cow to be with the bull for six to nine months and if she is not in calf she may be sold off or replaced with a new heifer cow. This way the herd is productive and healthy.

After the cows are pastured, the milk bails need to be cleaned, washed and meal replaced for the night milking. Now it is time for breakfast, followed by the many daily tasks of ploughing, slashing, milking. Maybe the cows need ear tagging for herd numbers, or fly control, or to be immunised against various problems to keep the herd healthy. Herd recording is done monthly as it is essential to know the cows that are dropping milk production as feed quantity will need to be adjusted.

Pasture seed is planted in spring and autumn. Silage bales need to be made while the top growing seasons are on. The days are long and hard while this



Although not common, Guernseys are preferred by some dairy farmers because of their high butterfat.

is being done, but silage is very necessary for the long winter months of cold and wet. I have known some dairy farmers to produce up to a thousand bails of silage a year. This silage keeps up the milk production when the frost or cold slows the pasture growth. Cows love silage.

Dairy farming is hard work but you are improving your own farm and teaching your children many skills first-hand. A dairy farmer is a milker, cow doctor, dietitian, pasture and seed expert, machinery operator and fixer, skilled repairer, a computer operator, business person and accountant. I always smile when I hear someone disparagingly say, 'Oh, they are just dairy farmers'.

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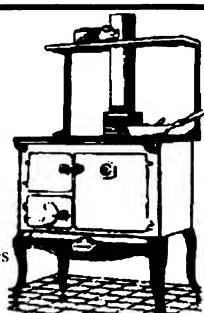
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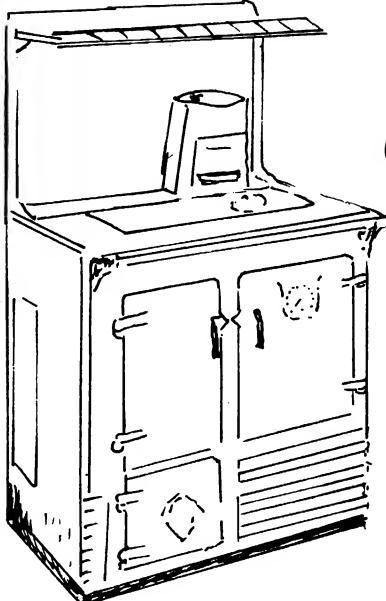
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Rebuilding A Combustion Stove Firebox

by Jim McCarter, Judbury, Tas.

lapsed in pieces into the bottom of the firebox. Immediate repairs were essential if further and possibly more expensive damage was to be avoided.

A year earlier, the circular cast iron grate had broken into numerous pieces and gone to the tip. I'd bought a new one, but then discovered it wouldn't fit properly into the grate carrier. So I put the new grate to one side and installed a number of lengths of 9.5 mm mild steel reinforcing rod as a 'temporary' make-do. Well, as you know, temporary make-dos have a habit of becoming permanent. The rods worked well until they all sagged from the continual heating and cooling, whereupon I simply replaced them with lengths of 12 mm steel rod bought cheaply as off-cuts from the local second-hand shop.

Even after eight months use, these rods were still doing a fine job. However, I did not realise how much they reduced the fire capacity of the firebox. We found we had to burn more wood and have longer fires to heat our hot water. We blamed the lousy firewood, though we'd collected and cut it up ourselves.

That's how the situation continued until the collapse of the two firebricks. My first move was to ring a Hobart company which is a Rayburn distributor in southern Tasmania. This company carries an extensive range of parts for stoves dating back to the Rayburn No 3, the model we have, first sold in the early 1950s. A company representative said, yes, a replacement set of firebricks for the No 3 stove was available, so we made a quick trip into Hobart and handed over the cash (\$132 at the time). At this time we were advised to take careful note of the location around the firebox of the old bricks when removing them, so as to be able to fit the new ones in their correct positions.

The following day, I removed all

the remaining old bricks from the firebox, not without some difficulty. All were greatly pitted, all were cracked into two or more pieces. It became abundantly clear at this time that the best way by far of relining the firebox would be with the entire stove-top removed (it is secured to the stove body by large countersunk bolts).

However, when installing the stove, the previous owner had built it in, then cemented lovely antique clay tiles on to the walls either side, from the stove-top upwards, and the base of each tile sat flush with the top, overhanging it by perhaps 9.5 mm. There was no way that stove-top could be removed without major hammer-and-chisel surgery to the tiles and then a retiling job would be needed afterwards. Not a happy prospect!

I cursed the original lack of foresight, and determined to try to reline the firebox through the opening in the top, after removing the large hotplate. I first removed the firebox and ash compartment doors, and the warming rack at the back of the stove-top, then, as I took out the old bricks, I carefully sketched their shape and position. Unfortunately, I threw out the broken pieces of two bricks, those at the top in the back and front, before realising the importance of sketching their profiles. Still, it didn't look as if they would present any troubles. With all bricks out, I carefully cleaned out all remnants of old fire cement.

It was at this stage that I discovered why the replacement grate I'd bought a year before didn't fit – the cast-iron grate carrier had a great chunk missing from one side, and was tortured and twisted from years of hot fires. I also realised that the only time that this carrier could be replaced was when all the firebricks were out, as was the case now.

Back into Hobart we went a day later, collected a new grate carrier (then

We had known for some time that our ancient (circa 1953) Rayburn slow combustion stove was not well.

The symptoms were unmistakable: pieces of firebrick found in the ash box; substantial cracks in the mortar holding the firebricks together; pieces of mortar missing altogether, leaving long vertical gaps in the corners of the firebox; part of the grate missing.

The stove had come with the house, a two-storey mudbrick and timber cottage we'd bought in 1992 after shifting from Adelaide. In fact, the Rayburn had probably been a critical factor in helping us decide to buy the house, as Janet had longed for a slow combustion stove ever since we'd married nearly four decades previously. Her eyes positively shone when we discovered the stove on the day we first inspected the house. Our rose-tinted glasses blinded us to the fact that it obviously was far from new.

Cooking aside, the Rayburn normally provides all of our domestic hot water, although we have had an electric element installed in the hot water storage tank, to do away with the late nights when we would get home to a cold house and then have to light the stove and feed it for an hour or two while it heated the shower water for next morning.

We ignored the symptoms of firebox troubles for as long as we could, until, that is, two of the firebricks col-

\$79) and tore home to get on with the job. But when I fitted the carrier, it seemed sloppy, and it *looked* smaller than the one it was replacing. Out with a ruler and sure enough it was 6 mm narrower and about the same distance shorter from back to front. Thinking I'd been sold a wrong unit, I rang the supplier, only to be told that it *was* the correct unit; the older one had distorted over its years of service. The supplier said that almost everyone who bought a replacement grate carrier made the same mistake as I did in assuming it would be exactly the same size as the one it was to replace. Greatly relieved, I set back to work again, deciding to fit the firebricks loosely in place, to see how they fitted; where mortaring would be necessary, and if there were any peculiarities to fitted individual bricks.

Well, I don't know how I preserved my sanity that day. A jigsaw puzzle gone mad would be the best way to describe it. The two bottom bricks each side must be installed first before the thick lower front brick goes in. Each corner of this brick is bevelled where it meets the side bricks, and they in turn are bevelled where they meet the front brick. But in the case of the bricks I had, one (that designed for the left-hand side of the firebox) had the bevel on the wrong side! As they had been carefully (and seemingly precisely) moulded, I figured I was doing something wrong. The best part of half-a-day's work, and the opinions of three others, convinced me we'd been sold a set with one wrong brick in it.

So I hauled everything out again, into the car, and we returned to Hobart where I poured out my tale of woe to the supplier. He checked his master list against the identification numbers on the errant brick; yes, it was definitely

part of the set for the No 3 stove. As a double check, he got another complete replacement set out of store and we checked the bricks against mine. They were identical.

The supplier said he'd had no personal experience in rebuilding a firebox, but he agreed with Janet and I that the lower left-hand firebrick had been bevelled on the wrong side to fit against the front brick as it should. So we packed up our bricks again and returned home where I took to the errant brick with my angle grinder with stone-cutting disc fitted, and carefully reshaped the front bevel. Not until this was done could the front brick be fitted into place.

I had been told previously that firebricks have to be handled carefully because they are somewhat brittle. Cutting them with the angle grinder and masonry disc presented no problems, but I was especially careful to use a gentle cutting technique, while the brick was supported in my workshop bench vice with a wooden wedge holding it firm. I first drew the profile of the cut needed on to the brick with a marker pen.

At this point I figured I had the problems beaten and a straightforward job would follow. Huh! I should have known better. The top right-hand brick is unusually shaped, having a long 'horn' on top of it at the front, which fits in around the steel smoke chute over the top of the stove. Trouble was, the new brick was about 5 mm too long to fit in the formed recess on the side of the firebox, and the horn was much too high to fit into the space available for it. And being fireclay, the old ones clearly hadn't been shrunk into place!

I could not believe that major surgery was needed for another care-

fully moulded firebrick! But that's what I had to do. I cut approximately 12 mm off the top of the horn, and 6 mm off the width of the base. Only then could it be fitted in.

The worst problem was fitting the last brick, after tossing a coin to decide which of the two top bricks fitted at the back of the firebox, and which one at the front. I got the back one right, but do you think it was possible to get the front one into place? Not on your nelly! It was too long to be fitted as I was trying to fit it – through the top-plate hole. I suspect that if I'd been able to get the entire top of the stove off, I could have wriggled it straight down into place with no problem.

Back to the angle grinder again, and I took about 6 mm off one end of this much-cursed brick, whereupon I was able to manoeuvre it grudgingly into place. Realising that it might be a bit more difficult once I had mortar on the brick, I several times practised putting it in, each time finding the task a bit easier. Right, now we could go to work for *real*! I had a four-litre can of ready mixed, air-setting fire cement, more than I really needed but I blessed the concept of not having to worry about running short of mortar at some critical point.

I removed all the firebricks, then carefully vacuumed the entire firebox area and the top of the oven to eliminate any loose dust. Then I applied thin mortar buttering to the firebricks, one by one, and fitted them back in position. I was very thankful I'd practised a dry run or two beforehand! As I went, I caulked all the seams and gaps with the fire cement, taking care to do a thorough and neat job. I used a variety of tools: some old plastic medical spatulas, a mini-trowel, an old kitchen knife.

Everything went well until I came to

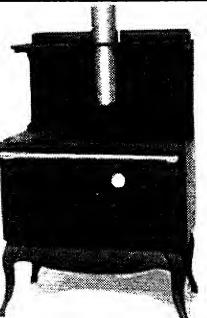
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the last brick, the top front one again. Whereas in practice it had slid smoothly into place, now it stubbornly refused to go in. No way! I fought and swore and went red in the face, all to no avail. Janet had a go, but no luck. Rested, I tried again and the brick slid in as sweet as a nut! To this day I don't know what I did differently, but it worked.

The remainder of the job was simple and straightforward, mostly just a matter of thorough caulking to ensure all relevant gaps were filled; that included gaps extending down alongside the ends of the big front brick at the bottom. I used a bit of flexible cane to pack these full of cement. The instructions on the can said to let the cement set properly before firing it, and then to fire first with only a small fire, sufficient to dry out the cement thoroughly and avoid cracking. We let our stove sit unused for another two days, then made just a small kindling fire for a half-hour to provide warmth to dry the cement thoroughly.

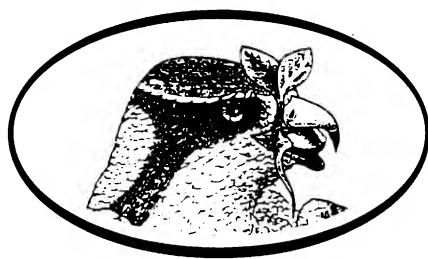
One thing was very clear even without a fire being set: the capacity of the firebox was not only significantly greater (because the proper grate sits a lot lower than the temporary steel bars

we'd been using), but more of the water jacket is exposed to maximum firebox heat, so we could expect hotter water from an equivalent amount of firewood.

Janet was ecstatic when we once again began having normal fires. Cleaning out is much more efficient (we can again use the riddler which rocks the grate back and forth, breaks up charcoal pieces and sifts ash down into the ash tray), but more important, the fire generates very much more heat now that the firebox is properly sealed again and the fires are burning in the right position. Getting the oven to a desired temperature now takes about two-thirds of the time (and fuel) that had been needed during the preceding 18 months.

In retrospect, I believe Rayburn should consider making available with every one of its replacement firebrick sets a pamphlet of instructions showing how they are to be fitted, and more importantly, warning that some bricks *must* be cut to size to be fitted into position. Hopefully, though, now that GR readers have been forewarned, they shouldn't have to go through the tribulations that beset us! Good luck!

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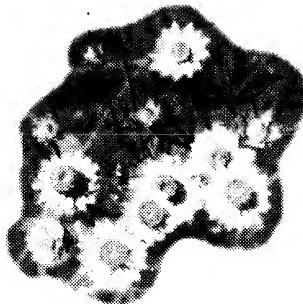
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Demystifying Swales

by Dorothy Creevey, Old Bonalbo, NSW.

Swales would appear to be a concept of permaculture that people have difficulty grasping. Most people who have attended our classes have struggled to understand the concept, so although they are a very simple idea I thought an explanation might be necessary. What many people visualise a swale to be is a diversion drain, but in fact they are opposite in their actions. See table below.

Diversion channels are gently sloping sealed drains designed to flow after rain to divert water away from valleys and into streams and dams; whereas swales are designed to absorb water into the ground, not to store it in the ditch but in the soil. They are long level ditches built on contour as they are not intended to allow water to flow. Instead, they catch or slow overland runoff water and hold it for a few hours or days, allowing water to slowly infiltrate the ground where it will gradually seep downhill, watering any deep-rooted plants on the way and eventually recharging ground-water supplies. By slowing the storm runoff, it is also reducing erosion.

WHAT DOES A SWALE DO?

- Collects silt.
- Recharges ground water (to 6 m).
- Prevents or retards erosion.
- Creates useful planting sites, giving a variety of conditions and micro-climates in or on the swale or interswale.



Using lime to mark swale positions before earthworks begin.

- Allows establishment of trees in harsh conditions.
- Can be a deposit area for undiseased garden trimmings (mulch pit).
- Acts as a windbreak planting area.

Water enters the swales from rainfall, roads, roof areas, tank overflows, greywater systems, diversion channels.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF SWALES

Swales can be built in different ways, but the one thing they all have in common is that they are all constructed on the contour line. They can be:

- living swales or mulch traps (small hand-dug ridges),
- rock piles thrown across a slope,
- hay bales,
- mass-rooted plants,
- excavated hollows on flatlands and low-slope landscapes.

WHERE TO PUT SWALES

- Anywhere you wish to slow water flow, with a few exceptions (see where not to put swales),
 - where there is silt runoff,
 - above erosion gullies (reduces runoff),
 - gardens, orchards, pastures etc.

I have put them in my orchard in a section where the poor soil was a fine sand that crusted over when dry and the lower area became waterlogged when wet. The idea is to create deep mulch pits beside each row of trees, which will not only add nutrition and retain moisture, but help to drain the lower waterlogged section away from plant roots while still holding the moisture.

WHERE NOT TO PUT SWALES

Don't put swales in slip areas, or in lowlands affected by or threatened with

| Difference Between Swale & Diversion Drain | |
|---|------------------------------|
| Swale | Diversion Drain |
| Catches or slows all overland runoff. | Designed to flow after rain. |
| Holds water for a few hours or days. | Used to divert water away. |
| Long, level excavations/ditches built on contour or on dead level survey lines. | Gently sloping to drain. |
| Designed to absorb water into the ground. | Sealed drains. |
| Reduces erosion. | May cause erosion. |
| Fully planted. | No trees or shrubs. |
| Eventually filled with mulch. | Kept clear at all times. |

salt problems.

If you are in a frosted area, be aware that frost may pool in an empty swale. This is not a problem if it is planted to trees that need the extra chill.

DISTANCE BETWEEN SWALES

This can be from three to twenty times the average swale width depending on rainfall. If the swale base is one to two metres, the interswale space (the area between the swales) should be three metres if the rainfall exceeds 127 centimetres, and 18 metres if the rainfall is 25 centimetres or less.

In sandy soils build them wide and shallow, in clay soils narrow and deep. The steeper the slope, the closer the contour, but never more than seven swales in succession as the area may become too damp.

DIGGING THE SWALE

Simple shallow swales can be dug by hand, but for a substantial one an excavator is the preferred machine for the job. It sounds expensive, but it can do a remarkable amount of work in a short time. For example, it took a small excavator around two hours to dig about 50 metres of swales in my orchard recently; admittedly, it is sandy soil but he also dug out several small trees. At \$50 an hour I considered it value for money. There are other machines capable of doing the job, a backhoe for instance, but it needs to reposition itself constantly, thereby taking extra time, and time is money. In a large paddock you could have a dozer drive on the contour, side-casting soil downhill as it goes.

Swales can be any length that is convenient. Leave land bridges for crossing where necessary.

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Large excavated swales can vary in width along their length.

In sandy soils the base should be fine as-is, but in heavy soils it may pay to rip, loosen, or add gravel, sand or gypsum to allow better water infiltration.

If you want to try growing water plants, or have any other reason for a more permanent water storage, you can install small sealed waterholes where you need them.

Once the topsoil has been replaced on top, it must be raked level as it is important that the swale lip remains dead level so water can overflow in an even sheet if the swale fills. An uneven lip would result in localised overflow from the swale, possibly causing erosion.

Procedure

Peg out the contour using a dumpy level, a water line, or an A-frame level. Mark the line by sprinkling lime on it. Save yourself some time/money by having these steps done before the machine arrives.

Have the digger deposit the soil just uphill from the line, but on the down-hill side of the contour, with the topsoil reserved for the machine to spread on top when the swale is dug.

LIVING SWALES/MULCH TRAPS

This is a way to create a simple swale. By closely planting mat-rooted plants on contour lines they trap the soil around their bases and slow the water

flow. Some plants to use are arrowroot, comfrey, lemon grass, ginger, or any plant with a matted root system. Plant them 20 – 30 centimetres apart (dig a shallow trench first). Or, to introduce mulch or companion plants, pile prunings of seeding plants in shallow trenches on contour lines. Some will grow and give you a dense line of plants. Slash occasionally to give you a continual supply of mulch.

ROCK OR HAY BAILE SWALES

Another simple way, especially on steep slopes, is to place rocks or to peg hay bales on the contour. If you only want to trap moisture and mulch around individual trees, on the down-hill side place an arc of rocks or hay bales or plant lemon grass which you can occasionally cut as mulch for the tree. These are good to use on steep slopes. If you use bales peg them.

A friend uses hay bales as walls for his chook coop, and when he renews them he lays the old bales on contour in the chook run where the chooks enjoy the worms and other life attracted to the moist soil near the bales, and the bales prevent soil runoff from the bare chook run. When the chook coop walls are again due for renewal these old contour bales are spread in the vegie garden as an aged and manure-laden mulch. The next lot are then placed on contour.



Swales being dug in the orchard to create deep mulch pits beside each row of trees.

FILLING THE SWALE WITH MULCH

In case you are imagining large trenches running across your garden or paddock, I must point out that the general idea is to fill them, or allow them to fill with mulch, silt or leaf drop. A full and planted swale is hard to detect on the landscape, but will still be doing its job.

It may take several years for tree belts to shade the swale base and to start filling with leaves, but if you are impatient you can fill them with any undiseased organic waste (a good place to deposit those prunings), or even sawdust. A friend filled his with sawdust immediately and now in a heavy clay soil he has swales of rich compost between every row of trees in his orchard. To the casual observer there is little evidence of the once metre-deep swales.

In sandy soils it is best to have wide swales that are filled with mulch as soon as possible, as the sides are inclined to fall in unless they are well mulched and planted immediately. They don't have to be filled if you prefer the depression. You could in fact plant them to grass and graze or mow them.

OVERFLOW

What if a swale overflows or holds water for longer than three days? Once the swale is full of mulch, worms and deep-rooted plants using the water and loosening the soil it shouldn't overflow. If it continues to be a problem you could try adding gyproc or ripping the base, or you could install an overflow to lead to another swale or a pond. The spillways must be on well grassed undisturbed soil, or be cemented.

Part II next issue, planting the swales.

PUMPKIN PEANUT DIP

3 cups dense fresh pumpkin (blue, Windsor, black)

1 tbsp crunchy peanut paste
sea salt to taste (ground)
chilli powder (optional)
1 - 2 garlic cloves, crushed
juice of 2 lemons

Steam pumpkin until tender. Pass through mouli or mash with fork together with peanut paste. Add remaining ingredients and mix well. Serve warm.

Carolyn Kirk, Rochedale Sth, Qld.

NATIVE GRASSES

SUMMER OR BOX GRASSES

by Andrew Briggs, Wellington, NSW.

As their name suggests, summer grasses (*Paspalidium* spp) are long-lived perennial grasses. Of the 23 different species occurring in Australia, 13 occur in NSW, all of which are native. Once regarded as a prime grazing plant '... large quantities of nutritious, palatable feed...' (Maiden, 1989), the true value of these species is now only recognised by a few isolated landholders. Two species in particular are of significance agriculturally, *Paspalidium distans* and *P. jubiflorum*, often referred to as Warrego summer grass.

Environments favoured by these grasses are heavier soils subjected to periodical inundation from flood waters, and it's a grass that responds well to irrigation. Indeed, *P. distans* has been referred to as a 'weed' in irrigated lucerne stands in the Forbes district. When occurring in this situation, this species has been successfully harvested with conventional lucerne seed harvesting equipment.

Whilst harvesting of this species is relatively straightforward in respect to equipment needs, differential ripening of seeds on an individual plant is particularly pronounced. This creates problems as to the time of harvesting to maximise viable seed collection. Close monitoring of stands is necessary to ensure success. This factor aside, box grasses have enormous potential for a fast entry into the commercial seed markets; they are relatively easy to harvest (equipment wise) and can be sown with any conventional seeding equipment.



Paspalidium jubiflorum: The differential seed ripening nature of this species is clearly demonstrated: seed on the right-hand stem has been nearly completely shed whilst seed on the left is not yet fully ripe.



KEEP NURSERY STOCK MOIST

When you buy bare-rooted nursery stock, keep it well watered before and after planting. This initial watering is the most important factor in keeping such stock alive and healthy. If you are not ready to plant in the final position, loosely cover roots with soil in a sheltered spot.

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CHINESE MARCOTTAGE

by Vance Avenell, Bundaberg, Qld.

'I've made a study of lychees – what types grow north, or do better south, the best soils for different old established names.' Jim was on his pet love; trees and their propagation. I was a willing, all-ears prisoner of his enthusiasm. 'I heard of a huge old lychee tree way out in the scrub, a left-behind planting from the turbulent Palmerton River gold rush days. So I got the 4 x 4 and bashed my way into it, and by Chinese marcottage got 147 successful plants from it. There was a lot of hard travelling and rough living, but it proved worth it.'

Jim continued to expand his subject. 'The Chinese introduced the lychee to Australia, way back in the gold rush days. They landed on the north Queensland coast in boatloads, dropped off clandestinely and left to fend for themselves. Poor peasant farmers mostly; recruited and financed for the cost of this risky venture by wealthy speculators who covered themselves from loss by liens taken on family farms. If the new chum Oriental gold seeker failed to pay, then away went the home clan's assets.'

They also introduced an ancient Chinese art of propagating fruit trees and shrubs. A process with a history going back in old Oriental records for

several thousand years. Strangely enough, the art largely faded into obscurity here in Oz.

Recently I was surprised by being introduced to marcottage, to use just one of its many sobriquets. Its excellence for obtaining well advanced, true-to-parent stock trees in a much shorter time was an eye-opener. Plants a metre high can be cut from the parent tree a year later, ready to go into the ground in well prepared positions.

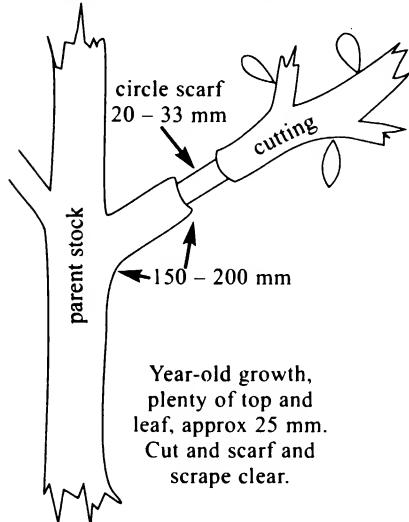
For centuries, before the modern industrial advances, the packing was traditionally a strong type of clay, moulded into a cover jacket about the rooting system medium, then further well wrapped in a well greased cloth to prevent the packing from dissolving in the rain.

METHOD

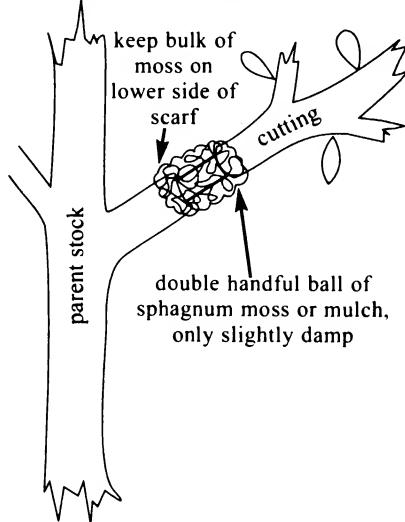
- At the beginning of the new growth season, select a multi-branched, well leafed stem, of last season's development, having plenty of active shoots. The stem should be as thick as a broom handle and in the vicinity of a metre long.

- Around 50 – 200 mm along the branch from the parent stock, remove the bark all around for a width of 20 – 30 mm; two light circling knife cuts

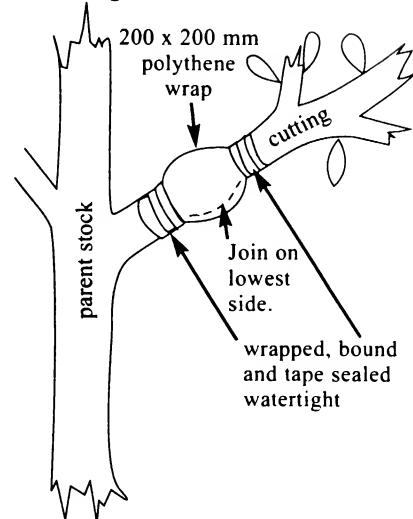
1. Spring: Select And Prepare Area



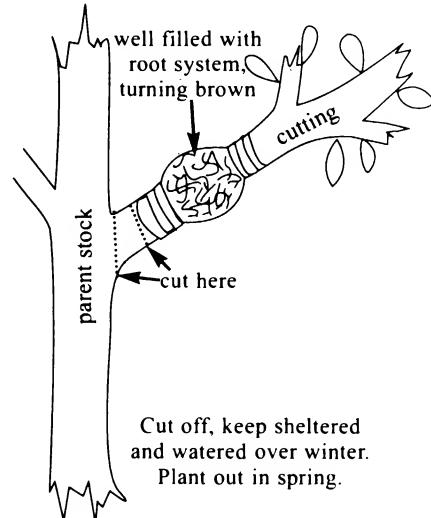
2. Cover Cut With Moss



3. Watertight Seal



4. Autumn: Remove New Plant



ALTERNATIVE NAMES FOR MARCOTTAGE

air layering
Chinese layering
gootee
pot layerage
circumposition

will do, taking care to scrape the exposed sap wood clean of surface connections that could allow healing of the cut and negate the development of root structure.

- Next, take a double handful of slightly damped rooting material: commercial sphagnum moss, or well decayed mulch. Pack this neatly and tightly about the open scarf, keeping it mostly on the lower side. This assists roots in the natural downwards search for nutrition.

- Have prepared some 200 x 200 mm polythene sheets, and some food bag ties and tape. Neatly wrap film about moss, finish with the end of the plastic wrapping at the bottom of the bulb. Securely tie off both ends about the limb, then tape watertight closed with sticky tape.

Note: Excessive moisture in the moss packing will cause rotting inside the wrap.

- Support the limb above the cut with a cord running onto the main tree or bush, somewhat higher up. If that is not possible, drive a support stick in the ground beside the limb.

- Leave till the end of the growing and fruiting season. Check the marcottage for root development. Some growers advocate waiting till the rooting system, visible inside the plastic, is turning from white to brown. Gently saw away from the parent stock, a close, sloping cut, that leaves no protruding stub and is close to the lower end of the wrap.

- Prune excess branches off, cutting a symmetrical growth shape and removing the major portion of remaining leaves.

- Leave in a pot through winter, or the slow growing season, in a shady protected spot. Mist with water at frequent intervals, tapering off misting towards spring. Prior to planting, expose plants gradually to harden in preparation for their in-ground, natural growth positions.



FLY REPELLENT

To help deter flies, hang lengths of cotton strips near the major entrance and exit points of your home, and dab a few drops of lavender oil on each strip.

Repeat as necessary.



DYES AND DYEING

by John Mount, Woodford, Qld.

The ancient Phoenician cities of Sidon and Tyre were the focus of a thriving industry for a particular famous dye, known as Tyrian purple. This dye was derived and processed from the bromine-containing secretion of a Mediterranean mollusc, known as the murex, or sea snail. Some experts claim the dye was produced as early as 1500 BC. Only a small portion of the shell could be used, making the dyed cloth very costly and limiting its use to the wealthy, so much so that Tyrian purple garments became a hallmark of the Roman aristocracy.

Dyeing is an art form and relies on the dyer to attend to the finest details in order to produce the desired finish. Variables can include the amount of dye required to produce the correct hue, knowledge of how the dye will react with previous colours and dyes, fabric types, and even how the finished product will react to daylight.

When dyeing an already coloured article, the colour of the fabric must not be darker than the dye colour to be used. If necessary, the darker colour can be bleached out before dyeing. An old English 'recipe' for bleaching was: 'to bleach clothes, dip into water and spread them in the sun on green grass, repeat several times'.

The mixing of colours (the dye with the existing fabric colour) is an art form on its own. The following table reveals the resultant colours obtained



when using different coloured dyes:

Our ancestors who did not have access to modern dyes and stains came up with some very ingenious ideas. For example, to get an ivory or creamy beige colour in cloth, dilute a little cold tea in the water. Coffee also dyes cloth a beige colour. The colours resulting from tea and coffee dyeing are usually permanent, although I'm not sure if all the different brands and types give the same results!

Of course, dyeing is not confined to cloth. When colouring your hair, it's a good idea to rub a little Vaseline or olive oil along the hairline before dyeing to prevent staining the skin.

After dyeing cloth it's advisable to set the colour (prevent running) by soaking the fabric in warm salty water (half a cup to one litre of water) for 20 minutes. Fading in fabrics can be slowed by adding a teaspoon or two of borax to the wash.

| Fabric Colour | Colour of Dye | Result |
|---------------|---------------|--------|
| brown | red | rust |
| blue | yellow | green |
| green | red | brown |
| green | yellow | lime |
| pink | light blue | lilac |
| red | yellow | orange |
| red | blue | purple |
| yellow | pink | coral |
| yellow | purple | brown |

GRAPE MARC IN THE GARDEN

by Ian & Glad McCulloch, Elizabeth Downs, SA.

Do you live in a wine growing area, and do you want to save water? If so, search out your area for grape marc (remains of grapes after pressing for wine making). We have used this wonderful stuff for about six years now and find that, apart from all of its other qualities, as a mulch it is most excellent.

Living in the driest state in the second-driest continent (only Antarctica is drier), battling with unemployment and a privatised water supplier, we had to do something about the economics of home gardening. Even in a heatwave we only water our beds once a week now. We did have access to a firewood supplier's yard for a few years, and he would let me take a trailer or two of what he believed was rubbish left at the bottom of his mallee root heap at the end of the season. This is also an excellent growing medium, especially for spuds. We had also used mushroom compost, but it became a little too expensive, and I think it does not provide the firm, blanket type of cover that grape marc does.

We read a book on no-dig gardening and decided that it was the way to go, and we have not looked back since. The trotting stables a couple of suburbs away provide us with free horse manure, and a half-hour trip up the track to visit a friend's dairy provides us with free cow manure. We are about to tackle a nearby egg producer for a free donation of chook manure as a bonus for buying some eggs directly from him. Pigeon manure is the ultimate manure and it can be delivered to your home in Adelaide by looking for the pigeon manure ad in the gardening section of the local newspapers.

Lucerne and straw are purchased at fodder stores. Ask for mouldy bales if they have any, as it can't be fed to animals and the dealer will see his chance to get a sale on what he thought was unsaleable, by selling at a reduced



The waste product from wine making makes a wonderful mulch/fertiliser in the garden.

price. Four railway sleepers on their edges in a square, with a two-centimetre thickness of newspaper tucked under them and forming a base within that area, will start you off. One bale of lucerne pulled apart is strewn across the paper, followed by a good layer of horse/cow manure. Half a bag of pigeon manure, followed by a bale of straw strewn across, then another layer of horse/cow manure goes on top.

At this stage it will look a mess, but if you don't mind it looking that way, put a gentle sprinkler on it for a while, do this every two days, only for five minutes at a time, until the undigested grain and seeds have germinated. You could let these grow to form heads, then push them over and cover with the other half-bag of pigeon poo and five centimetres of grape marc, or put the grape marc on after the majority of seeds have germinated. If you put the grape marc on straight away, you might get a nice crop of grain growing, which is fine if that is what you want, but for a neat vegie bed, smother the germinated grain and weeds with grape marc when you think most of them have started to grow. As a soil conditioner, it binds sandy soils, or loosens heavy clay soils. The breakdown to humus is rapid, therefore nitrogen is

quickly available to micro-organisms for fixation of plant nitrate.

Grape marc is converted to humus quicker than most of the more common mulching materials. This is because of its favourable carbon/nitrogen ratio (15:1). The NPK analysis here is typical: nitrogen (N), 2.80%; phosphate (P), 0.34%; potash (K), 1.01%; calcium oxide (CaO), 1.27%; carbon, 39.4%. If compared to a list of other favourite mulches, grape marc excels. Some users prefer to 'heap' it for about a year, but we build up our beds in autumn, then let nature take its course. It does get quite warm when fresh, so if we have to plant in it at that stage, we put the seedlings into individual scoops of potting mix, aged humus, or compost. For the first few days it may attract a few varieties of flies, but they soon disperse, as does the 'winery' smell. Don't let these two minor drawbacks put you off; get some manure, lucerne, straw, and grape marc, and by spring you will have a fantastic vegie or flower bed ready. Grape marc can be purchased at a reasonable price at nurseries north of Elizabeth, and, I guess, anywhere there is a concentration of wineries. My information was supplied by Cousins Garden Supplies, Tiver Rd, Evanston 5116.

WHAT'S ON

From organic produce in Emerald, Victoria to weaving in Denmark or China there is a range of activities available for the crafty, the health conscious, for potential straw bale builders, and even for aspiring authors.

STRAW BALE WORKSHOP

Learn this popular economical building technique at Kyogle (northern NSW) in April – May. For details call Inger: 02-6636-4321.

SHORT STORY COMPETITION

A component of the Festival of the Southern Ocean, this competition offers cash prizes to adult and youth winners. Maximum length 3000 words, entry fee of \$5, closing date 16 March. For entry form and details contact: E J Brady, Short Story Competition, Festival of the Southern Ocean, PO Box 201, Mallacoota 3892.

INTERNATIONAL WEAVING

Dedicated weavers/embroiderers might be interested in programs to be held in Denmark and China. Sessions in Denmark are from beginners to advanced and include Scandinavian weaving and fine silk weaving. The Chinese workshops include traditional K'o-ssy weaving and traditional Chinese embroidery. For details contact: Danish Weaving Center, Director Turid Uthaug, Fjelstrupuej 34, 6101 Haderslev, Denmark. Ph: +(45)-7452-7675, fax: +(45)-7453-4222. Email: wcenter@mail.dnbbs.dk Web site: www.weaving-center.dk

ORGANIC PRODUCE MARKET

Held at 374 Main Rd, Emerald, Vic, every second Saturday. Music, market atmosphere, great organic food including breakfasts and lunches, fruit & vegies, eggs, seeds, herbs, fertilisers, preserves.

MORIAC HARVEST FESTIVAL

This festival (25 March) includes a giant pumpkin competition, displays of alternative energy, Landcare, farm trees, pottery, livestock, heritage seeds, and much more. Games and entertainment for all ages. Held at junction of Hendy Main & Cape Otway Rds. For details contact: Julie Dyson, ph: 03-5266-1490, fax: 03-5266-1637.

HARRIETVILLE CRAFT WEEKEND

Organised by the Handweavers and Spinners Guild of Victoria Inc, this weekend (23 – 25 March) of fabric craft includes felting, using beads on knitted items, making tassel pillows and weaving in the round. Meals and accommodation included in fee of \$135. For details and enrolment form contact: The Handweavers and Spinners Guild of Victoria Inc, 12 – 20 Shakespeare St, Carlton North 3054.

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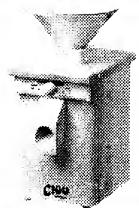
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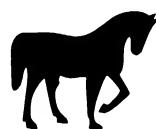


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Farming Option

by Colin Westwood, Murwillumbah, NSW.

Here we are in the brave new world of globalisation, economic irrationalism, downsizing, amalgamation and computerisation, which has left many of us in a constant state of anxiety with few employment prospects. With rapidly increasing mortgage rates to consider, the prospect of a farming business may seem to be quite remote. This was my problem in 1999 as I found myself out of work and unable to sell my town house for anything like what it would cost to replace. Many of you may be able to relate to this problem, as I notice it regularly mentioned in the Feedback pages.

Being unable to buy my own farm, the search for other options began. Enquiries were made amongst friends and neighbours seeking some sort of a solution to this dilemma. My friend Susan suggested that I enquire at various farms that looked interesting, regarding the idea of taking a long-term lease. Pretty soon I had a number of tantalising offers from people with large blocks who lacked the resources, time or energy to effectively manage it all themselves. All asked for nothing in return other than that I improve the land and control weed growth!

Fortunately I was able to select a hectare or so of one of the best farms in the Tweed Valley, in exchange for managing weed problems, tree planting and generally improving the landscape. So here I am now with my cosy little town-house (see GR135 'Wonderful Changes') and a marvellous little farm as well!

With a northerly aspect overlooking the ocean, spring-fed dams and rich basalt soils, my choice of potential crops is quite awe inspiring. A mixture involving coffee, flowers for the cut flower industry, taro, and a variety of fruit trees was decided on. Having a broad knowledge of what will grow in this area made the task of selection somewhat easier this time. The local market scene will provide the opportunity to value add and, with close proximity to Brisbane and the Gold Coast,



The water weed salvinia can provide large quantities of free, nutrient-rich mulch. It can be a race between Colin and the mite used in its biological control.



The lawn mower was modified so it could be used as a mulcher to help control another weed problem, bana-grass. It can still be used in the normal way, with some safety considerations.

retail and wholesale outlets abound.

Salvinia, which was a really big water-weed problem, previously required spraying when it completely choked the surface of the dams. It is now my greatest asset, providing large

amounts of nutrient-rich mulch at no cost whatsoever, except for the time taken to harvest and spread it onto the gardens. Biological control in the form of a small mite sometimes makes it a race for me to retrieve the water weed



Heliconia sassy flowers growing in the field.

before this little critter destroys the salvinia and sends it rotting to the bottom of the dam. This, however, seems to be a seasonal thing and sometimes it's nice to have a rest from constant weed dredging.

Another of the biggest weed problems here has been managing banana grass, which looks much like sugar cane and will regrow from leaf nodes if cut and laid down as mulch. It really needs to be chaffed before it is a suitable mulch and the prospect of another large expensive piece of machinery filling the shed demanded a creative solution. The lawn mower was modified to become the mulcher when necessary. A suitable sized hole was cut in the mower body above where the blades rotate and a flower pot finger-guard was bolted to the mower body for safety. A similar sized flower pot is dropped into the one bolted to the mower body when the mulcher is doing its usual mowing job.

The biggest start-up costs have been for a trailer, slasher, ride-on mower, shed, various hand tools, trees and a decent wheelbarrow. These would be



Heliconias and flowering gingers thrive in the area and have a ready market as cut flowers. Colin, ex-WWOOFer and now WWOOF host, has developed an interesting and low-cost farming option.

the basic necessities for anyone considering a similar operation. A careful shop about for second-hand goods should get you started for between three and five thousand dollars, which would barely cover your rates, reserve roads, pasture protection board levy and mortgage bills if you were to purchase a farm from scratch.

Heliconias and exotic flowering gingers are my main choice of flowers as they are hardy perennials in this part of the world and look absolutely stunning both in the field and as a cut flower. Anybody interested in growing flowers as a business will find the following web site well worth a look at in order to get some idea of the wholesale prices of a broad range of flowers and foliage. Other reports at this site will give you the prices for fruit 'n vegies, including a page devoted to exotic and Asian produce:

www.agric.nsw.gov.au/Hort/Fmrs/Fmr_s_report/flowers.htm

Anyone further interested in what I am doing currently is welcome to browse my web page at:
www.users.bigpond.com/cjwestwood/index.htm

So now, from having been an active WWOOFer (Willing Workers On Organic Farms), working on other peoples' organic farms, I am now one of the many WWOOF hosts that may be found throughout Australia on organic farms.

This may be a worthwhile option for many of you to consider as a way

into running a farm business without having to take on a huge debt which will mainly benefit the big business end of town. By networking and caring and sharing your land, big things become possible, so I would ask those of you who already own big blocks, to consider allowing others to help manage and improve the landscape with you. Happy farming.

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SHORTAGES

by Pam Cole, East Seaham, NSW.

Pam Cole reminds us that while many of us need to utilise our resourcefulness to cope with life's 'shortages', others have been there before under even more trying circumstances.

'Dratted old thing. Never poured right since I put it on,' Granma muttered under her breath as she reached for the teapot.

She was referring to her cherished old brown-glazed crockery teapot, the kind all kitchens had in the 30s and 40s, once as common as mud but at the time of her complaint almost unavailable with all the shortages that had come about because of the war. Most households had a prettier one in the china cabinet or on the traymobile for 'when the vicar calls,' as a friend says tongue-in-cheek. But the kitchen pot was the one in daily use and Granma's had come to grief, as they always did.

When its lid cracked in two after falling to the concrete hearth of her 'Kooka' stove she quite cheerily substituted a tin lid of similar size, to which she'd attached a wobbly knob handle by punching a hole and jamming in the cut-off top of a wooden dolly peg. Granma was a country girl and had lots of resourceful tricks up her sleeve. She didn't mind doing this: things were in short supply with the war, and it was all make-do-and-mend in those days. But when the spout of her teapot broke off it was a different matter. Away to the shops she marched, only to be told that 'there's a war on doncha know' and nothing on the shelves suitable as a substitute.

For a while she tried to keep up with its dribblesome ways, but tea went everywhere however carefully she poured. Finally, she bought an invention of the times: a replacement spout made of reddish synthetic rubber. Once stretched and manhandled into place over the broken spout, this more-or-less did the job. It looked thick and ungainly, became stained black top and bottom with tannin and never quite poured right. She put up with it, with the kind of cranky cheerfulness that was common to women in those days.

The war years were times of chron-

ic shortages. Not only were food, clothing and petrol rationed; metal of all kinds was diverted to the war service as were rubber, fuel, and many chemicals. Like most others in Australia, our family coped with the little inconveniences as well as the bigger traumas; an unreplaceable teapot was just one instance. The catchcry at the time was 'austerity', and it stood for short supplies, doing without, inventing something out of nothing. Crockery was in short supply, plastics were as yet widely unknown; austerity glassware was the replacement in the shops – thick greenish ribbed glass, cups and plates, bowls and dishes. 'Nasty stuff,' the ladies of our family murmured. 'Tea just doesn't taste the same somehow.'

With winter 1941 coming up we needed a hot-water bottle to share at bedtime. Mum trotted off to buy one, only to return looking exasperated. With the disappearance of rubber goods from the shops she'd had to make do with something very old-fashioned, which she said the man had found in an old straw-packed box of obsolescent merchandise in the store's back shed. 'Even my granma didn't have to use one of these,' she snorted, hauling out of her string bag a heavy bottle-shaped contraption of salt-glazed stoneware with a screw top. gingerly she filled it with hot water, half-expecting an explosion, but in the event the stone water bottle served us well for years. Once filled with boiling water from the kettle on the hob and wrapped in an old woolly jumper, it did a good job of warming our chilly beds. However, it was enormously heavy and its slippery unyielding mass was difficult for small girls' hands to grasp, so that its handling was fraught with care. If broken there'd be no replacement and we'd be back to remembering to heat a flatiron before the fire in the kitchen stove lost its heat



as it died down for the night.

And if teapots were hard to replace, tea itself became a bit of a luxury. At a few pence per pound it might seem inexpensive, but, as with all major food items, each person was entitled to a certain amount per month, which could be obtained only in exchange for a coupon clipped from the government-issue wartime ration book. The contents of the tea caddy were handled with as much reverential care as that mythical vicar's best china.

'It's a bit stewed . . . but . . .' a shrug, a grimace, and then a joke or two as the sloshy tea leaves from the morning tea cuppa were revived with boiling water at lunchtime. The old adage ' . . . and one spoonful for the pot' went by the board as well. These were little privations to be sure, but constant. Mothers and aunts, hard-working, frazzled with queuing and making-do, coping with home and family in the uncertain absence of their men, headachy, 'tonguing for a cuppa' as they'd say . . . how they deserved the tiny luxury of a decent hot cup, and how often went without it. The fighting spirit of these women, in how many little battles, is not to be discounted.

New saucepans and cooking pots

were unobtainable and I well remember Mum splitting her fingernails and reddening her knuckles as she battled to apply a 'Mendit' to a holey pot. These came in a sort of kit-before-kits-were-invented: a blue card with red printing, attached to which were several objects like metal washers with accompanying nut and bolt. Some were triangular in shape and others round. You put the washer part covering the hole on the pot's inner side, shoved the tiny bolt through the hole, and screwed the nut as tight as possible on the outer side of the saucepan. Another example of make-and-mend, and, the patriotic posters told us, more metal saved to throw at the enemy.

In a similar way there were leather cuff savers which mothers stitched inside the long trousers of any men left in the family, to save wear and tear. Once a shirt collar was frayed it was the practice to unpick it from its band, reverse it and stitch back into place, the frayed part tucked out of sight in the collar's fold and only good cloth showing.

There were more-or-less standard methods in wartime of altering the



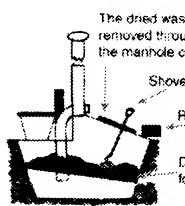
clothes of growing children. With so little cloth available and virtually no off-the-peg children's garments, and bearing in mind the government restrictions as to the number of clothing coupons allowable, most people would be familiar with some of these. First of course would be making something out of something else – a child's

garment from an adult skirt or shirt, cotton sunbonnets from a dress, little tops and shorts from the sound scraps of outworn clothes. Then there were 'alterations'. A skirt would be lengthened by cutting off the lower part, adding a strip of some other fabric, and re-attaching the cut-off piece. This could be done on bodices or shirts too. Skirts were easily enough widened by taking out the gathers or pleats or adding a downward strip of cloth. Hopefully all these inserted pieces matched the purple of the floral pattern with the purple of great-aunt's sacrificed skirt which was being chopped up for the occasion, but all too often this was not possible. Widening bodices was a little more tricky and usually involved inserting a side strip beneath the arm or one on each side of the front buttons. With skill and a bit of luck in the choice of insertion material these could be made to look like smart and quite intentional stripes, but quite often the 'bit of auntie's skirt' being thrifitly used was not so successful . . . a case, for the kids this time, to practise Gran's attitude of grin and bear it!

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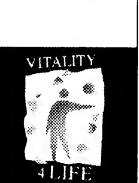
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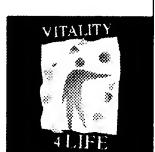
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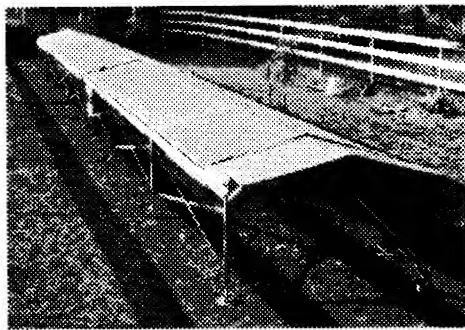
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13 Terrace St, New Brighton NSW 2481



ROUND THE MARKET PLACE

We hope you enjoy this feature introducing new products relevant to readers' lifestyles and interests.



SOLAR TUNNEL DRYER

The solar tunnel dryer works like a greenhouse, capturing the sun's energy and trapping the heat. Since higher temperatures (up to 65°C) are generated in the solar dryer, drying times are shorter and more of the natural colour and taste of the crop is retained. The dryer filters

the incoming air so much of the dust and dirt is removed prior to being used to dry the crop. A gas back-up heating system is fitted and can be used occasionally for drying if the weather is too bad. The dimensions of the dryer are 18 metres long and 2 metres wide. With a drying area of 20 m² and a crop capacity of 100 – 300 kg it is highly suitable for small-scale commercial producers of dried fruit and vegetables. Ideal crops would be apples, figs, pawpaws, mushrooms, tomatoes, bananas, apricots etc. The solar tunnel dryer is hygienic, easy to operate, has low operating costs, reduced drying time, crops do not require preservatives and their production does not produce greenhouse gas emissions. Its retail price is around \$10,000.

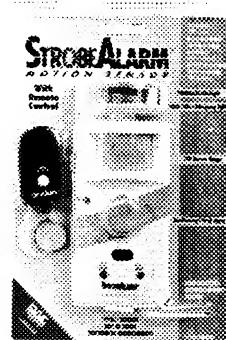
For more information, contact John O'Donoghue, Kialla Solar Dryers, 4 Raftery Road, Kialla 3631, ph: 03-5823-2728.

STROBE ALARM

Dick Smith Electronics has launched a new security system for the home and office. The strobe alarm features a 120° motion sensor that detects and deters unwanted visitors. When set off, the strobe alarm will begin a series of blinding strobe flashes and an ear-piercing 120 dB alarm. After 30 – 60 seconds the alarm automatically resets itself. The security system has been designed for indoor use and comes with an adjustable mounting bracket. The strobe alarm is totally wireless, requiring only one nine-volt battery and six AA batteries. Battery life is usually three to six months, depending on how often the alarm is triggered. Alternatively, the strobe alarm can be used with a power adaptor. The system is easy to install, and comes with two remote controls for easy activation, and warning stickers. It can be purchased for \$79.96 at retail outlets, via mail order, or by visiting the

Dick Smith website.

For more information contact: Dick Smith Electronics, PO Box 321, North Ryde 1670, ph: 1300-366-644, or visit the website on www.dse.com.au



MULCH SPREADER

Developing markets that utilise organic waste is an important priority today as tonnes of material is being diverted from landfill and providing benefits to agriculture and the environment. A recently designed green waste spreading machine will go some way to assisting with the development of such markets. The Seymour Green Waste Mulch Spreader works as a tractor-drawn trailing machine and takes four cubic metres of mulch which it spreads onto the land. Field trials have shown organic applications lead to a considerable improvement in crop yields and the mulch spreader will make application that much easier. The mulch spreader can successfully handle green waste mulch of differing density, texture and moisture content, and retails at around \$18,000.

For more information contact Seymour Rural Equipment, Elizabeth Street, Seymour 3661, ph: 03-5792-1100.

EDUCATIONAL VIDEOS FOR GARDENING ENTHUSIASTS

Australian Correspondence Schools have produced a series of six intense training program videos designed to assist anyone wanting to know more about identifying plants. *Plant Identification*, *Herb Identification*, *Australian Native Plants*, *Identifying Tropical Plants*, *Identifying Bulbs and Perennials* and *Identifying Trees and Shrubs* are all crammed with knowledge and provide three and a half hours of information for the budding horticulturist. Plant knowledge is introduced systematically and you will learn to identify the scientific names for over 500 plants and recognise their characteristics with ease. In addition, the videos cover gardening techniques such as planting and staking, companion planting and no-dig gardening. Each video, plus other garden design titles, is around the \$30 mark.

For more information contact The Australian Correspondence Schools, PO Box 2092, Nerang MDC 4211, ph: 07-5530-4855, or visit the website on <http://www.acs.edu.au>

MAINE WIRE PRODUCTS

Maine Wire Products' wire plant trainers are a handy support system for any garden enthusiast, providing a variety of geometrical shapes and forms that offer creative opportunities and increased scope in the garden. These versatile wire plant trainers can be used to support many vegetables and climbing plants: tomatoes, beans, sweet peas or roses. The supports have interlocking ends that can be put together or disassembled easily and quickly making the system ideal for seasonal vegetables. They are strong, which means they are effective for permanent displays such as roses, vines and other climbing plants. They fold completely flat for storage convenience and are easy to assemble. The trainers come in modules of three panels and the units are interchangeable. The total length of the three panels is 1100 mm and heights vary from 900 mm right up to 1800 mm. They are available in a powder coated green or galvanised finish. Prices start at around \$13.40.

For more information contact Maine Wire Products, PO Box 409, Castlemaine 3450, ph: 1800-240-970.

RECENT RELEASES

Titles described can be ordered through your nearest bookstore.

THE COOK'S GARDEN

... from the garden to the table

Caroline Gunter and Karen Green

This is another one of those great publications that *Women's Weekly* are so well known for. In it you will be shown how to prepare, plant and cultivate your own produce. And what could be better than the satisfaction of preparing a meal where the ingredients have come from your own garden. You will learn about dealing with pests and diseases, how to prepare the soil, what to plant when, as well as tips for cooking and preserving your produce. The details are laid out seasonally, with sensible checklists of what vegetables can be planted in different garden types to make your work as easy as possible. Included in the details of each season is a section on relevant fruit and herbs. Apart from all the useful gardening tips, this book is worth purchasing simply on the strength of its delicious culinary and serving suggestions.

P/b, 120pp, *The Australian Women's Weekly*, GPO Box 4088, Sydney 1028. Ph: 02-9282-8777. RRP 12.95.

ITALIAN RICE DISHES

Diane Seed

The author has spent 30 years in Rome and runs a cooking school where she teaches about Italian regional cuisine. The introduction describes the history of rice in Italy and gives general directions for how to cook rice in a range of ways: as risotto, boiled, deep fried and in basic stocks. The bulk of the book contains the recipes, organised according to: vegetables, fish, meat and poultry, cheese, and finally, stravaganza – for that special occasion. The recipes sound wonderful, and will certainly appeal to both keen cooks and those fascinated with all things Mediterranean. Illustrations are colourful but sketchy and completed dishes are not pictured.

H/b, 138pp, Hodder Headline Australia, Level 22, 201 Kent St, Sydney 2000. Ph: 02-8248-0800. RRP \$35.

THE LAW HANDBOOK

Your practical guide to the law in Victoria

Unlike most legal texts, this handbook has been written with the aim of being practical and easy to read. And, what's more, it is! This reference book will be a great help for people wanting to understand the law and make informed decisions about where to go for help. It covers over 50 areas of Victorian law from relationships to transport, and debts/bankruptcy to housing. The handbook clearly outlines the legal processes involved, while simplifying complex jargon. A must for anyone who wants to keep informed of their rights.

P/b, 832pp, Fitzroy Legal Service, 124 Johnstone St, Fitzroy 3065. Ph: 03-9411-1309. RRP \$60.

DREAM DECODER

Reveal Your Unconscious Desires

Fiona & Jonny Zucker

Many people are fascinated with dream interpretation. This colourfully illustrated and interestingly formatted new book will be a useful starting point for anyone wanting some basic information presented in a readable manner. It briefly discusses the psychology of dreams and examines positive and negative meanings of a range of common dream symbols.

P/b, 144pp, Simon & Schuster, PO Box 507, East Roseville 2069. Ph: 02-9417-3255. RRP \$29.95.



THE DOG BOOK

How to Choose a Dog that Suits your Personality and Lifestyle

Robin Stewart

Over the summer holidays we always hear terrible stories about dogs being dumped by families who no longer want to be responsible for them. The poor mites end up at the local pound and only the very lucky ones go on to be with another family – the rest end up dead. Maybe if more people chose a dog that was appropriate for their lifestyle this would happen less. Robin's book will help anyone considering this important addition to their lives to reflect on a number of points before coming to a final decision about which pooch is best. Things to consider are the dog's coat care requirements; its sex; your age, personality and lifestyle; not to mention finding a suitable breeder. The temperament and characteristics of 44 popular breeds are outlined, together with colour photos to assist decision making. Robin is well known to *Grass Roots* readers, and has recently published *Chasing Rainbows* and *Robin Stewart's Chemical Free Home*.

P/b, 152pp, Hyland House, PO Box 122, Flemington 3031. Ph: 03-9376-4461. RRP \$24.95.

TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR HEALTH AND ESCAPE THE SICKNESS INDUSTRY

Elaine Hollingsworth

Elaine Hollingsworth is Research Director of the Hippocrates Health Centre on the Gold Coast. Although 72, she could pass for 50 and has plenty of tips to pass on to us so we can maintain our youth. Much of her advice covers things we should and should not be eating in relation to our long-term health. Building bone density, alleviating menopausal and hormonal problems, as well as remedies for a range of conditions are considered, along with some warnings about everyday household products and foods. Much in this book is likely to alarm you as it contradicts contemporary mainstream professional views.

P/b, 174pp, Hippocrates Health Centre, 6 Julie Way, Mudgeeraba 4213. Ph: 07-5530-2939. RRP \$26 incl GST & postage.



DOWN HOME ON THE FARM

by Megg Miller.

It's so hot it is hard to move the pen across the page. Perspiration is dripping onto the paper and making fingers sticky, and I suspect it isn't only the pen that is not inclined to work. Certainly it's summer and we can expect high temperatures but does it have to be so damn hot? We're enduring the top thirties at present, with 40° C promised for tomorrow. Visiting the loo earlier, an outside one of course, I had to push a bunch of panting turkey pouls aside to enter and then avoid the prostrate cat. The concrete floor offers cool solace to the cat's belly and the turkeys congregate there because it's cool and shady and they can quench their thirst from the cats' water bowl. There is no need for a thermometer to gauge how hot it is, today the toilet recorded fifteen pouls and one cat. That's probably equal to around 38° C in layperson's terms.

Sharing the loo with the cat isn't a

problem and the turkeys are bearable because they're young, provided they stay outside, that is. Frogs, however, are another matter. With the weather so hot and the countryside dry, a resourceful amphibian took refuge up under the lip of the toilet bowl where the water flushes out. One morning, following a long sit and contemplation of life's events, it flushed out with the water. Ugh! It was almost unrecognisable as a frog, the small space it was inhabiting having flattened it out. It truly was no more than a centimetre or so thick. Amazed and appalled by its presence, I went back five minutes later and flushed to check it really was there. Frogs may be harmless, but they're not the preferred companion of a bare bum. Without any foul play on my part it disappeared a couple of days later. I was wondering if my high-fibre diet caused too much disruption to the frog's quiet life. I swear I still wait with anticipated

horror every time I flush.

The poultry have all been frazzled by the hot days. No matter how many containers I fill with water before work, all are empty by nightfall, and the damp soil where I rinse the containers out will have been shaped into crater-like holes from the day's dust bathing. Step into these in the dark and you think your days are done for. High temperatures definitely exacerbate broodiness. Every quiet shed, every dark corner is home to aspiring broodies. They get short shrift when I notice them and spend a few days in the clucky cage, but some are persistent and are returned time and again. The clever hens continue to hole up where I can't reach them, in the woodpile or under wormwood in the house garden. To sit on the verandah at the moment is like being part of a large nursery. Numerous hens are wandering around with broods of chickens. One black hen



The vegie garden – before the wind blew off the protective shadecloth covering.

had nested under foliage right at the corner of the verandah. She was extremely well camouflaged and equally determined to produce a family. After a couple of altercations I retired hurt and thought a few chicks a fair price to keep my fingers whole. The hen hatched the thirteen eggs she was sitting on and has turned into the nicest little mum you could imagine. The pecking and posturing were clearly to keep me away.

I sometimes wonder if the chooks don't have an organised rotation system for the nesting sites. They really do go for the unreachable spots. The little family groups around the garden are proof their desire for seclusion when sitting on eggs works. An egg eating dog would be very handy during the nesting months, but my Maria couldn't be tempted to such a vice. There are a few months before all the littlies reach adulthood and lots of dangers along the way. Surely they won't all survive. It's always galling that the crossbreds are so fertile and vigorous while the pure breeds can hardly reproduce themselves.

Maria the Maremma has been huffing and puffing because she's still carrying her winter coat. You'd think the thick undercoat would have been shed by now, but no, it's only just starting to drop out. It may be that as she gets older her hormones, or whatever triggers the shedding response, have become lazy or inefficient. She received a snazzy brush and comb at Christmas time to help get rid of the tangled mass. The dog turns ten around about now, a fair age for her particular breed, and you can tell because she has slowed down considerably. Towards the end of the year a couple of grass seeds got caught between her toes and in no time she had a swollen painful foot and was limping around on three legs. The vet had to anaesthetise her to examine the foot and found not one but three grass seeds working out the top of her foot. It was a great opportunity to trim the hair between all her toes and cut back nails as well. She has recovered now and will even allow her feet to be examined, provided I'm very quick. It was such a relief to hear her defensive barking at night again and to know the property was in good paws.

It was a foolish mistake last issue

writing that nothing unintended occurs in the vegie garden. Such provocative words are sure to attract trouble. Almost the next day plants started to bolt to seed, growing upwards and outwards at an alarming rate. If they weren't obscuring the path they were smothering neighbouring plants. Worse, though, was to come. A wild wind – it must have been a ginormous one – ripped the shadecloth covering the vegie garden right off. I was speechless when I discovered it and am still at a loss as to how it occurred. It's a huge expanse of shadecloth and was secured firmly with plastic electrical ties. They snapped under pressure and at the same time one of the cemented-in metal poles was wrenched sideways. The raspberries and strawberries have been badly burnt by the sun and it's been a real effort for plants acclimatising to the bright hot world. It's a nuisance too as I can't work there any time of the day but have to wait until after the sun has dropped in late afternoon. Obviously the wind will be an ongoing problem and a more reliable method for securing the shadecloth needs to be utilised. I only get over to water a couple of times a week and it would be foolish to put in seedlings now that wouldn't survive the hot, open conditions. As annoying as it is, I'll be enjoying a forced slowdown, not a bad thing when watering is already quite a job. At least I'm still harvesting beetroot, eggplant, tomatoes and mouth-watering corn, in addition to the usual range of greens. The potatoes have sulked and died back so there may be some tasty fare there as well. What I'm missing is basil. The young plants couldn't take the drier growing conditions and died. I'm going to have to ask Suni to cut some bunches from her prolific balcony garden and share them with me.

With time off from the office between Christmas and New Year, I was able to indulge in the luxury of sleeping in and to lie in bed and enjoy the many bird noises that can be heard of a morning. As well as a multitude of clucks and chirps from chooks and turkeys there was lots of twittering in surrounding trees. Several times in a half-awake state I heard soft tapping on the window, a new and puzzling noise. It turned out to be a little finch pecking

at dead insects on the glass. Several mornings in a row this busybody woke me up and it was with regret I put the flywire screen back over the glass. The bird is still out and about under the verandah but, of course, can't get to those old insects any more. It would be nice to think it had a mate or family in the shrubs nearby.

I confess I did go off to work, but took the opportunity to drive down some of the back roads enroute and was amazed and delighted by the wealth of birdlife they carried. There were families of birds everywhere, doing what birds love to do. I also saw a monitor dash across the road, a fellow of about 75 centimetres long, and realised just how many years it was since they were last about. Once you couldn't drive in summer without seeing one, now they're a rare sight. They used to come and harass the poultry, chasing broodies and gobbling up the chickens and frightening the life out of us. Poor Suni discovered one amongst the poultry when she was just a preschooler and was certain she had seen a dragon. Habitat destruction and the increase in fast traffic have obviously taken their toll and the monitor doesn't come calling anymore, despite all the eggs and chicks on my place. I don't usually bother with New Year's resolutions, but this year have decided to take every opportunity to drive on the quieter roads, the unsealed ones, and enjoy the bush and birds, and maybe an echidna or monitor before they all disappear. Thank goodness there is a greater awareness about conservation now.

PENPALS

Hi, I am a happy single man living in a flat with a garden. At the moment I have ten tomato plants. I like music and the holistic lifestyle. I'm 44 and would like to hear from others with similar interests. Though I have a car, I like my pushbike too, for exercise. Please write, I will reply.

Arthur

9/12 Perth St, BENALLA, Vic 3672

Gentlewoman, 60+, seeks, penfriends any age, anywhere. Interests include classical music, gardening, ecology, ethics, animals (especially dogs). Living in country & socially isolated, need your letters folks!

Jacky

C/ PO Box 117, SEYMOUR 3661.

GRASSIFIEDS

HOW TO ADVERTISE

Use the form provided below, or a separate sheet of paper, to print your advertisement clearly, **not in block capitals**, including correct punctuation. If you have more than one ad please print each one on a separate page. Remember to include an address or phone number in your advertisement. Count the number of words and multiply by 85 cents per word (phone number counted as one word) to work out the total cost of your advertisement. Send **with payment** to Grass Roots, PO Box 117, Seymour 3661, before the deadline and we'll include your advertisement in the next issue of Grass Roots. **Deadline for GR 144 is 28th February, 2001.** Please do not fax ads.

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PROPERTY FOR SALE

NEW SOUTH WALES

MURRINGO VIA YOUNG and Boorowa, 63 ac, 3 b/r, brick veneer, Spanish style house. Bore, sheds, dam, 10,000 gal tank. \$150,000. Ph: 02-6384-6216.

NYMBOIDA, NORTH COAST, beautiful 4 b/r w/board home with unique features & outstanding outlook, fertile 25 ac, sparkling crk + easement to Nymboida River, irrigated f/trees & estab gardens, good alternative power supply, second cabin/studio. \$160,000. Ph: 02-6642-4814 AH.

NYMBOIDA, TRANQUIL ONE HUNDRED ACRES, 2 b/r cottage + log cabin for visitors. 100 assorted f/trees & nuts. Beautiful views. New solar power, 2 dams, new double garage, new animal shelter or fernery + 3-bay garage & workshop. \$120,000. Ph: 02-6649-4928.

MUDBRICK HOME on 16 ac, 4 b/s lounge room, family room, lge kitchen, bathroom, en suite, separate laundry. Slow combustion & gas stoves, abundant birdlife & wood supply, 90,000 lt tank & 2 dams, one equipped with electric pump. Town water avail. No neighbours, hundreds of native trees, vegie garden, orchard, chook yards, cow bale, double garage, barn. Cowra, Blayney & Canowindra 25 mins. \$185,000. Ph: 02-6367-5291.

MERIMBULA, TURA BEACH, residential land from 700 m² to 2000 m², ocean views, fully serviced. From \$44,900 - \$74,900. Ph: 0427-250-288.

MID NORTH COAST 1/2 share 58 ac, Company title on Comboyne Plateau, 70% finished (160m inside). Livable house, big shed, wide verandahs, ph & solar power. Rainforest, spring creek, dams, fenced gardens. Lots of wildlife, nth facing, wonderful views, all weather 2WD access \$79,000 ONO. Ph: 02-6556-0235.

JERVIS BAY AREA (Wandandian): lifestyle/income. Charming, quality home overlooking stunning views, 30 fertile ac suitable for boutique horticulture/tourism/agriculture or expansion of present Boer goats. Great riding tracks. \$329,000 ONO. **LIFESTYLE/INCOME:** Exceptional rammed earth, passive solar home with permaculture/3 ac mini-farm. A teaching/workshop facility – organic agriculture, permaculture, earth/alternative building technology. Approved B&B \$219,000 ONO. All hard work done. Two 'must see' properties. Ph: Diana 02-4443-4266

MID NORTH COAST, 180 ha, 60 km from Wauchope. Timbered hill country, pockets r/forest, waterfalls, 3-room cabin, fuel stove, h/c water, shed, 3 dams & spring. \$70,000. Ph: 02-6587-5201.

BYRON HINTERLAND - HUONBROOK - 26 ac share on multiple occupancy, 20 ac r/forest, 6 cleared. Borders Coopers Creek with swimming holes. Beautiful, huge, solid ironbark beam house, 2 b/rs, study, cathedral ceilings, leadlight windows, elec & gas. Spring water. Wrap-around verandahs with views of Wanganui Gorge waterfalls. Tractor/slasher incl. Mullumbimby 20 mins, 40 mins to Byron. \$310,000. Ph: 02-6684-6406

EMMAVILLE, 4 b/r home, 5 yrs old, low maintenance, on 2 ac, in bush, on bitumen road, 4 km Emmaville, 22 km New England Hwy. Pretty & peaceful. 10,000 gal tanks, dam, mains, ph, school bus at door. Established gardens, birds, wildlife, fishing & fossicking paradise. \$150,000 ONO. Ph: 02-6734-7358.

RIVER FRONTAGE, 30 km sth Eden, 40ac, native bush, lagoon, shed, c/van, good river soil. \$65,000. Agent, 02-6496-1790.

Email: snowplow@ihug.co.nz

SWAP/SELL our Creewah 117 ac retreat, 2 b/r 4-yr-old solar passive house, river frontage, abundant wildlife, all-weather access, power, ph, 20% pastured, good soil, water, estab gardens, 1 hr coast/snow, 2 hr Canberra. \$125,000. More info ph: 02-6458-5330 AH, 0419-690-544.

SHARES ON ESTABLISHED conscious community, Byron Bay hinterland. \$90,000. Ph: 02-6684-9394, 0412-149-677.

BELLINGEN, KALANG VALLEY, 53 ac, secluded perm crk, valley, certified organic macadamia orchard. Fully equipped solar powered mudbrick house, 17 km from town. Phone, stable community, exotic birdlife, incl 4WD tractor & all equipment. \$315,000. Ph: 02-6655-2982.

BOMBALA 3 b/r house on 3½ ac land, subdivision potential, 5 mins walk from town, 1 hr drive to coast, 1 hr to skiing. \$90,000. Ph: 02-6494-2193

DORRIGO AREA, cabin on 25 ac, f/trees, rock pools, natural r/forest, $\frac{1}{3}$ cleared, crk. Only \$72,000. Ph: 0408-113-596. 0412-367-923

GRASSIFIEDS

PROPERTY FOR SALE

NEW SOUTH WALES

NEW ENGLAND TABLELAND, NSW, 100 ac. Natural forest block with lge granite boulders, cleared areas. On-site power. Fully fenced. School bus at gate. Armidale 30 mins. \$52,000. Ph: 07-4635-0383.

MAGNIFICENT VIEW from refurbished 2 b/r fully furnished cottage on 106 forested secluded ac, surrounded by nat pk & forests. Self-contained with solar, generator, gas, woodheater, composting toilet, tanks, pump & has permit for plant nursery. Kempsey 30 mins, school 15 mins. Price \$100,000. Ph: 02-6566-5924, or 02-6569-9201.

LOVELY SMALL SECLUDED COTTAGE – r/forest mtn setting, much wildlife. Good water supply, spring & tank. Wood chip heater, solar power, trop f/trees, school bus, + 2 ac share on MO, Channon/Nimbin area, main & 3 rooms. Price \$59,000. Ph: 02-6621-4981, or 03-9499-3463. Brigitte Zweng, 22 Clarice St, LISMORE 2480.

TURA BEACH, DOLPHIN COVE near Merimbula, 2 huge adjoining ac blocks, gently sloping land, ocean views, nat pk surrounds & underground power. Last coastal acreage avail. \$98,000 & \$115,000. Ph: 02-6495-4877.

NORTHERN TABLELANDS BUSH RETREAT, 710 ac north-east of Armidale, f/hold title, bounded on the east by Guy Fawkes Nat Pk, with spectacular gorge outlook. The block is densely timbered, undulating to very steep, with access to a semi-perm crk on the western boundary. \$72,000. Ph: Derry, 02-6772-7444, 0407-293-419.

VILLAGE COMMUTE, CANBERRA ½ hr, 3 b/r, building, cladded home on ½ ac f/hold, dble garage, town water, gas heating. Relocation sale. Bargain \$70,000. Ph: owner, 07-4124-9632.

NEW ENGLAND TABLELANDS – Glen Elgin district, 100 ac. Natural forest block with spring-fed crk & lge granite boulders. Land faces nth/sth & backs onto Butterleaf State Forest. All peace & privacy, 41 km NE Glen Innes. \$39,000. Ph: 07-5465-4091 after 6 pm.

QUEENSLAND

NOOSA HINTERLAND: Low-set 4 b/r brick country retirement home, ¼ ac, close to amenities, great value, fenced, views. \$115,000. Ph: 07-5485-1306.

LOG CABIN, CUNNAMULLA QLD, ¼ ac, quiet edge of town, bush outlook, air con, gauze verandah, new HWS, renovated. New shed 20' by 10', concrete floor, has water/elec connected. 56 trees/shrubs planted. \$29,500. Ph: 07-4655-2038 BH, 07-4655-2417 AH.

Don't forget to include your area code with your phone number. It's best to set it out as 00-0000-0000.

**DEADLINES: GR144 – FEB 28TH
GR145 – APRIL 30TH**

WORK FROM HOME at Kookaburra Park, or just retire in a safe village environment where you can be as private as you like or as involved as you like. Each lot is f/hold & sited in a 360 ac park setting. Teaching & learning are major activities. Stages 1, 2 & 3 are now sold, stage 4 now selling. We are getting towards the end of the development stage. Many people have purchased more than one block & we have 3 generations of one family & 4 generations of another already here. People have come from all around the world & 16 different cultures are already represented. For more info ph: Barry or Christine on 07-4157-2850, or look at our website: www.sunweb.net/kooka/

RUSSELL ISLAND, 2 blocks of land (one double & one single), 20 mins water taxi to Cleveland – buy double & get single free. \$8000. Ph: 07-5486-5486, or 07-3349-6812.

KINGAROY, SE QLD, 105 private ac fully fenced, incl guaranteed water supply from Tarong pipeline. Attractive, high, level block, some of which is improved pasture, rest original tall timber & some regrowth. Set up for horses or cattle with round yards, loading ramp & fenced paddocks. Ideal rural lifestyle with fantastic red loamy soil, will grow anything: olives, grapes etc. Be quick to build or organise a removal home & receive up to \$15,000 Government rebate assistance to install solar power, or hook up to the nearby power line. Vendor can assist with solar power option. Priced for quick sale – \$96,000. Ph: 0428-795-791.

ATHERTON TABLELANDS: Home on peaceful 2686 m², 3 b/r, office, stone f/place, 2 bathrooms & toilets, workshop, sheds, bore. Close to historic Herberton. \$58,000. First National Atherton. Ph: 07-4091-1177.

BARGAIN ACREAGE, PRIVATE SALE. Investment/permaculture ready. You shouldn't have to try hard, or feel self-conscious, 160 ac f/hold, 34" rain, perm crk NE boundary, significant mill hardwoods, poles, wildlife, adjacent state forest, undulating, rectangular, substantially fenced, uncleared, secluded. Tiaro Shire, Maryborough 36 km, sea at Hervey Bay 70 km, Brisbane 270 km. Town power access, telephone reconnect, dam, hut, shed, tank. 1995 land only valuation \$110,000, was \$168,000 10/95 cover O/Own. Now \$99,000 ONO. Owner now interstate, MUST SELL. ALL ENQUIRIES REVERSE CHARGES, 07-4128-4617.

MILLMERRAN, 20 ACRES, power, 2 dams, rustic 3 b/r cypress pine house, estab garden, fully fenced, plus 6 ft house fence. Ph: 07-4695-4221.

ORGANIC FARM, 25 ac fully fenced, sheds, dams (3), brick 3 b/r home, solar powered, complete history avail. Frost-free land, school bus at gate, certification in process. \$150,000. Ph: owner, 07-3374-3131.

HOME & INCOME, Peak Crossing. Four ac, town water, 55 mins Brisbane GPO, 1976 w/board home, 3 b/r & office, insulated ceilings, air con family room, l/g pool, lge verandahs, extensive vistas with mountain views, advanced tree plantings & koalas, close to school bus. Separate s/c flat rented for \$90 pw. \$150,000. Ph: 07-3300-9172.

DARLING DOWNS LAVENDER FARM, close to Warwick and Toowoomba, 10 km to Allora, 40 ac incl 4000 plants on 10 ac, 15 ac lucerne for mulch; balance grass, trees; dam, sheds, electric bore, comfortable house with bitumen rd front. Heaps of potential, \$185,000 ONO. Ph/fax: 07-4696-4179.

GREAT VIEWS & LOCATION, 42 ac, foot of Mt Bauple Nat Pk, r/forest country. Frost/chemical free, ½ hr from Gympie & Maryborough, 300 m to Bruce Hwy. Large variety estab bamboos & f/trees. Good dam, shed, tractor, implements. Three b/r renovated Queenslander. School bus to door. \$190,000. Ph: 07-4129-2337.

SEVENTEEN ACRES, perm river water, pump, flood free, good soil, big steel shed with 6 comfortable stables, corral, cattle yard. House: lge b/r en suite, 2 lge b/r, 2nd bathroom, laundry, shower, toilet, open lounge-dine-kitchen. Beautiful view, no through road. Two large r/w tanks. Six km to friendly Canungra town, 30 km Gold Coast. Dexter stock going larger. Owner going larger property. \$310,000. \$230,000 cash. Owner may consider finance, balance interest free. Ph: Len Colman, 07-5591-3676, or 07-5532-2631.

GRANDCHESTER, 1 hr Gold Coast/Brisbane, 45 ac, beautiful views, slightly undulating, good soil, 50% cleared grazing, 50% lightly treed, elevated home sites, fully fenced, seasonal crk, lge dam, power/ph approx 300 m away. \$70,000 ONO. Ph: 02-9948-6720 AH.

BEAUTIFUL, PRIVATE VALLEY of 160 ac, near Gin Gin in SE Qld. Ideal climate & aspect, frost-free home site, abundant dam water, 37 varieties f/trees, power & ph. Dwelling of 30 sq m & 90 sq m house 70% complete. Photos avail. \$139,000. Ph: 07-4157-2736.

RAINFOREST RETREAT & sml camping area 2 km from nat pk, situated on pristine crk. Enviro-friendly, requires partner. This 20 ac property has huge potential in alternative tourism market. Website: www.bushcamp.net or ph: 07-4958-3204.

THE VIEWS ARE GREAT from these 2 ac of flood-free terraced land, only mins from Gympie. Selectively cleared with bearing f/trees & estab natives, this sealed cul-de-sac also has the availability of power, ph, postal service & school bus to the door. Retirement forces sale at \$35,500. Ph: 07-4164-5636.

JUST FOR YOU: Beaut low maintenance brick home close to Brisbane & all amenities. Land to grow your own vegies. Heaps of potential. A steal at \$82,000 (ONO). Will consider exchange for acreage home. Ph: 07-3396-0918.

STANTHORPE, FORTY ACRE bush block, crk, solar home, 2 b/r, 2 lge tanks. Quiet, safe area. \$95,000. Ph: 07-4683-4254.

GRASSIFIEDS

PROPERTY FOR SALE QUEENSLAND

FIFTY KILOMETRES NORTH-WEST GIN GIN, 880 ac, f/hold house, power, ph, bus, sheds, 9 dams, perm crk, 4 ac wine grapes, full plant mill timber, carry 170 head. 40" r/fall, suitable cellar door/farmstay. \$260,000 ONO. Ph: 07-4156-3516.

COUNTRY COTTAGE 2½: b/rs on 90 ac, 75 km NW of Kingaroy. Fully goat fenced, incl Boer buck & breeders. Enclosed, irrigated vegie garden. Two solar power systems. Very lge dam with jetty. \$96,000 WIWO. Ph: 07-4168-0273.

LOCKYER VALLEY: 20 ac Laidley Crk, irrigation licence, dams, 6 ac cultivated lucerne, sorghum. Currently running meat goats, 6 paddocks, 8 lge pens, ringlock fences, sheds, yards. Modern 3 b/r brick 14 sq. 5 mins town, town water, 1 hr Brisbane, 10 mins University Queensland Gatton, 35 mins Toowoomba/ Ipswich. \$140,000 ONO. Ph: 07-5465-3214.

COMMERCIAL FREE RANGE EGG FARM, only accredited free range farm in the Bundaberg area, 35 ac, 40 km west Bundaberg, 10 km east Gin Gin. Renovated old Queenslander, estab garden. Owner will train. \$285,000. Ph: 07-4157-4139.

TARZALE, ATHERTON TABLELANDS, 13 ac, spectacular 360° views. Comfortable weekender with power, ph & potbelly. Large shed/garage, elec pump from spring to 3 tanks. f/trees, chemical free. \$130,000. Ph: 07-4096-5541.

GIN GIN, ABSOLUTE BARGAIN, 25 ac bushland, 3 b/r Queenslander, big shed, workshop, dams, f/trees, school bus. \$89,000. Ph: 07-4157-6562.

VICTORIA

OMEOW, 2 b/r, modern, kitchen, pantry, lge lounge/dining room, woodheater, nice view. easy garden, c/port, shed, 2 entrances, no neighbours, 5 mins shops, ½ hour snow. 1½ beach. \$47,000. Ph: 03-5152-2004.

NEAR WARBURTON, charming mudbrick cottage on 2½ private landscaped ac in a family neighbourhood. Double b/r, sleeping loft, 22' cathedral ceilings, o/f, s/c/stove, ph, elec, gas HWS. Dam, shed, certificate of occupancy, near historic Reefton Hotel & school bus. Bushwalking, horse & trail-bike riding. Plans, permits & excavations completed to extend to a full-size family home. Vacant possession. \$105,000 ONO. Ph: 03-5156-4652.

FULLY RENOVATED PINE/HARDIPLANK 24 sq 3 b/r home (air con). Fresh water bore all year round, on 5 ac. Ideal for organic/hydroponic farming as no chemicals have been used in the last 30 yrs. Main Princes Hwy frontage in Pirron Yallock with great coastal traffic flow between Melbourne, the Great Ocean Road & Warrnambool. Asking \$62,500 ONO. Please ph: 0427-323-958, or 03-5275-8900, or email at: jjforks@bigpond.com.au

PLACING AN AD?
See page 75 for details

PEACEFUL BUSH RETREAT, Stawell area, solar power farmlet, gives uncomplicated economical lifestyle. This 26 ac property has 4 paddocks, one dam. The 12 sq home has open living, meals & kitchen area, a Masport combustion stove & gas refrigerator. Three b/rs, 2 with built-in robes, septic toilet, shower, bath, laundry, 14,000 gal tank water, lge shed. Bargain \$79,000. Ph: agent, 03-5358-1300.

EAST GIPPSLAND, 5 b/r, newly painted, furnished, all gas, on 22 ac, 1 km state school, 10 mins high school bus. Surrounded by 3 nat pks, clean river, good fishing. \$80,000. Ph: 02-6458-0253.

COTTAGES, TWO ON SIX BLOCKS in quiet country town, all services, new air con, lots of trees. \$30,000. Ph: 0418-596-965.

WANGARATTA/BENALLA AREA: 4 b/r home, lge lounge, kitchen/dining, plenty shedding, very good water – rain & dam, lge block Thoona township, school, shop, hotel. Price: \$79,000. **BUSH SETTING**: (54 ha – 134 ac) with 3 b/r timber home, excel views, sundry shedding, located midway to Wangaratta/Benalla. Mostly bush, seclusion. Spring & crk water. Price: \$105,000. 61 HA (150 ac): 3 b/r timber home, good sized lounge & kitchen, lovely views. Seclusion & bush. Price: \$99,500. Garry Nash First National, 23 Baker St, WANGARATTA 3677. Ph: 03-5722-2663. Contact: Andrew Walker.

FOR GENUINE SALE, 137 ac Combienbar property, 2 b/r Hardiplank home, elec HW, gas stove, combustion heater. Kitchen with walk-in pantry or office, all new windows, ¾ renovated. Excellent stock yards, steel 3-bay hay shed, with walls, 2 smaller wooden sheds with 3-phase power. River through property, ample water. Asking \$150,000 (shire rates value) ONO. Ph: 03-5625-3560.

SECLUDED FOUR BEDROOM WEATHERBOARD home, lge lounge, modern kitch/dining, office, big verandah, beautiful estab garden with orchard, perm water, tennis court, c/port, yards, spring-fed dam, 17.5 ac, suit vines, lavender, olives etc. Central to Seymour, Euroa, Yea, Alexandra, 2 hrs Melbourne. Ph: 03-5790-4255 AH.

ONE ACRE, surrounded by millions of ac of bush (crown land), very solid dwelling, minimum size, fire resistant, solar lighting, full septic system, very secluded hideaway, ½ hr from Orbost, East Gippsland, Vic. \$50,000. Ph: 0428-994-267, 03-5154-1455 AH.

BENAMBRA AREA, lge country home on 1½ ac of trees & lawn, 4 b/rs, 2 bathrooms lge lounge with gas heating, kitchen & dining area with new dishwasher, ample cupboards. As-new carpet. Sunroom, lge laundry, c/port & garden shed. Excellent water with bore to 145 ft, & r/water tanks. Price on enquiry. Ph: 03-5159-1271, 03-5159-9237 AH.

TASMANIA

KING ISLAND – HOBBY FARM, 7½ ac, fertile sloping land, well fenced, 2 dams, 2 sheds, Pollution-free island. Three b/r home, nth facing sunroom, garden & sml orchard, fowl yard. \$88,000. Ph: 03-6461-1234.

WARM AREA, 25 ac, perm clean water, volcanic soil, tall trees, secluded. State forest 3 sides, 15 mins to town, 25 mins to coast, 1¼ hrs Launceston, 2 storey stone & block house. Forced sale \$95,000 ONO. Ph: 03-6339-4363.

TASMANIA FIFTY ACRES east of Ben Lomond Nat Pk, stream-side hut, ½ pasture. Ultimate peacefulness. \$63,000 ONO. Ph: 03-6376-2253.

COUNTRY TRANQUILLITY, only 40 mins to Hobart. Chalet-type cottage on 60 ac (approx, ½ block listed on National Estate Register). Prime regrowth eucalypts, with blackwoods, tea tree, wattles etc, incl approx 5 ac man-fems. Nature walk (1½ hrs) with rock cabin & splendid views. Permanent crk, estab gardens & paddocks near house. \$185,000. Ph: 03-6295-1822.

EAST COAST, over 10 ha good soil, stone pine & blackwood plantings. Permanent water supply, sea & mountain views. Sunny terrace. New comfortable cottage with mains power & ph etc. \$79,000. Ph: 03-6372-2037.

PEACEFUL, SUNNY, SHELTERED coastal block, 60 ac, timbered, dam, subdivision STCA, 30 mins lge town, 60 mins city. \$135,000 ONO. Ph: 03-6243-7763.

MARGATE, MUDBRICK, 3 b/r 2 storey with separate studio/workshop on 7 ac of bushland. Situated 20 mins sth of Hobart this house features extensive use of Huon pine & celery top. Priced to sell at \$120,000. Ph: owner, Paul, 0408-123-161, or to view ph: 03-6227-8010.

UNIQUE LIFESTYLE, 3 b/r renovated home, many built-ins, 2 ac, 60' barn, workshop, studio, lge undercover work areas. Five mins walk to all amenities incl schools, hospital etc. Property is self-suff most of year: meat, eggs, fruit & vegetables. Town water, r/water + perm rivulet. Ten mins drive to beautiful beaches. Work from home. \$89,000. Ph: 03-6372-2460.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

BROOMEHILL, 20 km sth of Katanning, passive solar, rammed earth, 2 b/r house, 1.75 ac, dam, estab organic/permaculture, within town limits, ideal retirement opportunity. \$120k. Ph: 08-9824-1385.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

ORGANIC PERMACULTURE, lge block in town on River Murray. Self-suff almost complete, cottage owner built, not finished, amenities connected. US\$60,000 ONO. Replies: IT (GR143), C/- PO Box 117, SEYMOUR 3661.

Please print your ad clearly
so we can do likewise

CLASSIFIEDS

PROPERTY FOR SALE SOUTH AUSTRALIA

COMMUTE ADELAIDE, 1ge workshop, storage, shop front, basement. Covered parking five vehicles, pit. Large residence, built 1903 as boarding house, 1/2 ac gardens. Rear access. Walk to all town facilities. \$130,000 - \$160,000. Riverton. Ph: 08-8847-2665.

COMMUNITIES/SHARES

UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY, 1/24 share in 6400 ac, 2 1ge rivers + junction. Select a 20 ac homesite, share remainder. Mostly timbered, 2 hrs Lismore. \$25,000. Ph: 02-6666-1382, 02-6622-1952 BH.

NORTHERN NSW, FIVE ACRE share on community close to Nimbin/Kyogle. Rainforest setting with a shed, water tank, dam. \$20,000. Ph: Craig, 07-3857-3707.

HOUSE OVERLOOKING RAINFOREST in beautiful 1000 ac MO, NSW far north coast. Fruit trees. Well-estab, environmentally friendly community, abundant wildlife. Owner reluctantly moving for family reasons. \$70,000. Ph: 02-6633-1216, 02-6633-3190.

MID NORTH COAST, 1/6 share 600 ac, 1 hr Pt Macquarie, good soil, water, sml house, r/forest, river. \$18,000 or vendor finance. Ph: 02-6587-4328.

FAR NORTH COAST NSW, 5 ac share, 15 km Nimbin, Border Ranges Nat Pk area, 2 b/r timber home, cathedral ceiling, front & back verandahs. Full solar system, gas & solar hot water. Beautiful setting, flooded gum forest, some cleared land. Public primary school & Steiner school close by. J Barrett, Lillfield, LILLIAN ROCK 2474, Ph: 02-6689-7087.

FAR NORTH COAST, 1/25 share on 1000 ac MO. Home, sheds, nursery, beautiful gardens, crk, wildlife refuge. \$85,000. Ph: 02-6633-3304, or 02-6633-3210.

PROPERTY WANTED

WANTED TO BUY, 2 - 3 b/r house garage - shed - power - ph - dam - crk - bitumen, 5 ac, Lismore/Casino area. Rerent 5 - 10 years. \$50,000 - \$60,000, single budget. Ph: Heather, 02-4574-1114, Windsor. 22 Samuel Street, BLIGH PARK 2756.

HOUSE ON FIVE TO TEN ACRES or more. Area to be between Wollongong & Mittagong to Katoomba & Gosford inclusive. Seller's terms to be maximum \$5000 deposit with up to \$250 per week till balance paid. Ph/fax: 02-4228-1393.

FOR RENT/CARETAKER WANTED

RENT & CARETAKE, doll's house needs TLC. No power, but water tank, on 2 ac on hill. Nth NSW, Billan Cliff, Larnook. Ph: Nat, 0418-268-142.

**DEADLINES: CR144 - FEB 28TH
CR145 - APRIL 30TH**

EXCHANGE VAN, light duties pony stud, milk goats, mow etc, 50 ac, horse sense an asset. Ph: 07-5463-7666.

PERSON(S) TO SHARE/RENT house, c/van, secluded Hunter bush block, 60 km Newcastle, very negotiable. Ph: 02-4938-2036.

SOLAR POWERED MUD BRICK house for rent. Two b/r's on 200 ac with conservation covenant. Secluded with great view, 12 volt fridge, ph. Near Dargo, Gippsland. Ph: 03-5158-0125.

BUSINESS FOR SALE

DENMARK WA, ORGANIC RETAIL BUSINESS. Denmark Fruit & Veg is situated in the heart of Denmark on the beautiful sth coast of Western Australia. One owner since 1991, an accredited organic retail business, is also known for its select range of grocery products. \$78,000 plus stock. Ph: Janice, 08-9848-1991 weekdays.

WANTED TO RENT/CARE-TAKE

GOING ON HOLIDAY? Don't know what to do with the animals? Need a house aunt? Experienced English lady, excel references. Ph: 0031-6237-1678.

PROFESSIONAL COUPLE SEEKS HOUSE SITTING situation Tasmania. Excellent references. Ph: 07-4959-1303.

COUPLE, THREE CHILDREN, 2 horses & dog, seeking to rent property near Albury WA from end Feb 2001, time negotiable. \$140 pw. Ph: 08-8321-9003.

ANYONE WITH A KIND, COMPASSIONATE HEART around Nanango & Kingaroy Qld that will give people a go. Single mum seeks 4 - 5 b/r farmhouse, acres, long term, from Jan 01. Willing to do repairs, hard working, honest, permaculture, love nature. References avail. Ph: Kath, 02-6785-1747.

OPPORTUNITIES

FREE RENT FOR CARPENTER/builder very handyperson in small SE Qld town, 1 hr west of Brisbane. Old railway cottage, 3 b/r, 2 sleep-outs. Ph: 0409-890-454.

WILLING WORKER WANTED! Help on 150 ac nth NSW. Accommodation & veg/food provided. Animals, wildlife, forest hermitage. Ph: Paul & Carole, 02-6737-6868.

Email: Dhutanga@dingablu.com.au

COMMUNE MEMBERS WANTED. Four n/s, n/d, fit, hardworking, partners required, ladies or couples. Accommodation & transport supplied. No money input required. Naturistic lifestyle on magic hilltop, Whitsunday Qld acreage. Ph: Mike, 07-4945-1714.

ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY DOMESTIC CLEANING: areas available in Victoria & metro Melbourne. Do you have the desire and ability to run your own business, an interest in wellness, prefer a co-operative way of working, at the same time earning a good reliable income? If so this might be the business for you. It offers a tried and tested business system, low start-up costs, part or full time with comprehensive training and ongoing support. For further info contact: The Healthy Environment Cleaning Co, mob: 0407-781-025.

Email: healthyenviron@hotmail.com

OPPORTUNITY FOR ACTIVE HEALTHY single/couple/family to harvest chestnuts in NE Vic in April. Free c/van accom avail. References desirable. Ph: 03-5728-6605.

PUBLICATIONS

'GRASS ROOTS' issues 2 & 4 - 131. The lot \$100. Ph: 07-5486-2552.

SAVE \$100'S ON DIESEL FUEL using recycled materials. Simple, easy, safe, no chemicals. \$15. R Turner, PO Box 211, TABULAM 2469.

HOME EDUCATION for info send SAE to: Alternative Education Resource Group, PO Box 71, CHIRNSIDE PARK 3116.

'OTHER GENERATIONS' is a new & exciting magazine containing true historic stories. Take a step back in time & experience the Swinging 50s, Life without Electricity, War, The Great Depression & more. The first issue will be delivered to you on 1 March 2001. Simply send \$7 (1st edition) or \$28 (4 editions) to: Other Generations, PO Box 5, ERINDALE, ACT 2903. All prices include GST & postage & handling, (ABN: 33 951 514 587).

STEINER HOME SCHOOLING? A teaching manual by Alan Whitehead on Creativity and Curriculum. Send \$12 to: Golden Beetle Books, Box 329, BLACKHEATH 2785. Ph: 02-4787-5335, fax: 02-4787-5339. Visa-Mastercard.

www.users.bigpond.com/goldenbeetlebooks/
'NATIVE STINGLESS BEES' for profit or pleasure - how to get started, pollination/honey potential in Queensland. Detailed info booklets, packed with photographs, diagrams. For free catalogue, send name, address & 45c stamp to: ANBRC, Box 74-G4, NORTH RICHMOND 2754.

'NIMBIN NEWS MAGAZINE', is a co-operatively run access magazine with articles & information from Nimbin and other areas. We cover concerns relevant to alternative lifestyles & others looking for the most sustainable way. We are one of the longest running alternative magazines & the Nimbin bioregion is at the forefront in the development of sustainable systems. As networkers we scan many mags for suitable & scarce information for our readers. Subscription: 6 editions for \$18, sample \$3.50. Back copies 5 for \$12 posted. PO Box 209, NIMBIN 2480.

GRASSIFIEDS

PUBLICATIONS

NEW VEGETARIAN & NATURAL HEALTH, the magazine of the Natural Health & Vegetarian Societies. Subscribe today, \$30 yearly and receive: 4 vital magazines, discounts at participating health food stores and natural therapies practitioners, listed in magazine. Head Office, 28/541 High St, PENRITH, NSW 2750. Ph: 02-4721-5068.

WHY FARM RABBITS?: Shed design, breeding, health, nutrition, set-up cost, costs, returns, breeding program. Ph: 02-6558-8287.

BOOKS, NEW AND OLD. Australiana, lifestyle, Pacific, biography, horticulture, gardening, outdoors. Lists avail. BA & JM Wallace, Box 325, PORTLAND 3305.

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STONE GROUND FLOUR, in-home, with a SCHNITZER German quality hand or electric stone mill, 10 models, from \$178. Send SAE for info, add \$5 for video. SCHNITZER MILLS, PO Box 1867, BOWRAL 2576. Ph: 02-4861-1581, fax: 02-4861-1249. Visit our website at www.schnitzer.com.au

HOME STONE FLOUR MILLS – mill your own stoneground wholemeal flour for cakes and bread at home with a Retsel Little Ark stone flour mill. Endorsed by Housewives Association. Write for catalogue to: Retsel Distributors, PO Box 712, DANDEMONG 3175, encl 3 postage stamps. Ph: 03-9795-2725. Distributor enquiries welcome. www.retsel.com.au

MISCELLANEOUS

WINE PRESS, 22 lt capacity, as-new condition. \$320. Ph: 03-9776-7159.

TEEPEES, VIKING TENTS, medieval tents, swags, buckskin clothing. Seventeen years experience BOJO PRODUCTS, PO Box 112, AVENEL, 3664. Ph: 0412-368-034, 03-5796-2753 AH.

ARE YOU LOOKING for ways to make & save money from your home? Send today for your free info on booklet, 101 ways to do so. Send stamped SAE to: Belledel Enterprises, PO Box 5424, MANLY, Qld 4179.

HELP WANTED ON SMALL ORGANIC vegan property, exchange for separate accom & food. Grays, Box 212, SHEFFIELD, Tas 7306. Ph: 03-6491-2408.

HOW TO MAKE MONEY selling & making chess pieces, bird baths, fine art, gnomes etc. Plaster and/or cement moulds. For methods & catalogue send \$14.95 to: Williams Imports, PO Box 989, SOUTHPORT 4215 (06/50 Railway St). Ph/fax: 07-5532-9050. Website: www.supermoulds.com.au

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PLACING AN AD?
See page 75 for details

BHUDEVI, THE PUREST GOODIES on the Planet! At reduced prices. www.bhudevi.com.au Ph: 07-5527-6828.

HEALTH & BEAUTY

ORGANICALLY GROWN traditional herbal remedies for everyday conditions, arthritis, psoriasis etc. For catalogue please send stamped self-addressed envelope to: Tintagel Herbs, PO Box 27, CENTRAL TILBA, NSW 2546.

KOMBUCHA TEA MUSHROOM & brewing instructions. Mail order, \$15 posted: Fey Becker, MS 897, RAVENSBORNE 4352.

ONE HUNDRED PERCENT NATURAL herbal tonics, send SAE for prices. Something for most ailments. 'Farmacy', 167 Goondoon St, GLADSTONE 4680, or ph: 07-4972-1404.

ALL NATURAL – HANDMADE – moisturising creams, lip balms, heavy duty creams, soaps & polishes. Beeswax-based products. Brochure SAE: Moorebee, J Products, 70 George St, WOODFORD, Qld 4514.

ESSENTIAL OILS, very high quality, emu oil & neem oil, w/sale, retail. Mackay Ti-Tree Oil. Ph/fax: 07-4943-0570.

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ZAPPY NAPPY 'Nappies that don't cost the Earth'. Made of 100% cotton flannelette. One size fits newborn to trainers. Waterproof/breathable overpants, extra liners, patchwork bunny rugs, premature infant nappies and doll nappies. All of our products are quality Australian made. To order please tel/fax: 07-5442-8033, or write to: Zappy Nappy, PO Box 260, EUMUNDI, Qld 4562. Wholesale distributors are required in most areas. Please contact Zappy Nappy for more info.

HANDMADE PURE VEGETABLE OIL SOAPS. These natural soaps are suitable for people who have sensitive or problem skin. For a product brochure send SAE to: Bushcraft Soaps, Lot 3 Counter Rd, M/S 591, GYMPIE 4570. Ph: 07-5486-7299.

FOR SALE

TWELVE VOLT FRIDGE, 140 lt, \$600. Generator, Honda 2.2 KVA, \$650. Inverter, \$100. Gas fridge, 120 lt, \$150. Ph: 02-6352-5274.

'GRASS ROOTS' MAGAZINES – 122 copies between Nos. 6 & 141. \$250 + postage. Ph: 03-5468-7262.

COMPOSTING TOILET, brand new, Nature Loo. \$1600 – save \$550. Enquire: Peter, 03-5966-6260. Also, as-new scythe & Wolf hand-furrower. \$30 each.

NORTHERN TERRITORY long & short neck turtles & freshwater crocs now avail. Ph: 08-8988-1130.

TRANQUILLITY BODY PRODUCTS, all-natural body products with no chemicals added. Please send SAE to: Lyn Jones, 9 Allunga Ave, PORT MACQUARIE, NSW 2444, or email: ljtranquillity@aol.com

COURSES

OVERSEAS VOLUNTEER DEVELOPMENT COURSE: Seed saving in permaculture action. April 2 – 7, Oct 1 – 6, Byron Bay, NSW. Ph: 02-6685-6624/02-6685-7560.

Email: info@seedssavers.net

Website: www.seedssavers.net

NEW INTERNATIONAL ECOLOGICAL STUDIES program at Crystal Waters. Designing with Ecology in Mind. Courses led by David Orr (Professor of Environmental Studies, Director of the Center for Ecoliteracy, USA) & local guests. June 3 – 15, 2001. Ph/fax: 07-5494-4833. courses@permaculture.au.com www.permaculture.au.com

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YOUNG MAN, 48 yrs old, campervanning to nth Qld, leaving April or May, seeks female company. John, 1/16 Anson Ave, EVANS HEAD 2473. Ph: 02-6682-5905.

MALE FORTY-THREE, seeks a like-minded lady from the Riverina (or willing to relocate) for friendship/possible perm r/ship. I'm tall & thin, honest, a nonsmoker/nondrinker with a wide range of interests incl subsistence farming/gardening, draught horses, growing trees, leatherwork, country/popular music & good movies/theatre. Please write: John (GR144), C/- PO Box 117, SEYMOUR 3661.

SINGLE MUM, mid 40s, looking for kind, sincere, understanding, loving man who appreciates the nicer things in life. Reply: KM (GR143), C/- PO Box 117, SEYMOUR 3661.

SEEKING POSITIVE MAN, mid fifties, n/s, n/g, s/d, interests arts, New Age, environment or academia, for lasting r/ship. Ph: 02-9545-4815 AH.

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SINGLE WOMAN wishes to share happy fulfilling lifestyle with male 40s or 50s. Please write: Lyn (GR143), C/- PO Box 117, SEYMOUR 3661.

MALE FORTY-SEVEN seeks ahimsa-greenie female who wants to raise children to learn fruitarianism, hands-on organic agroforestry & write software presentations. Why? So the children gain aptitude, might convert humanity to favour ahimsa 'nonpredator' food systems after having pioneered frugivore agroforestry featuring rare oil palm fruits & new freedom habitats for homeless dogs. Ph: 0500-898-890.

MALE, 36, slim, 5/6", looks good. Seeks a partner with interests in country living, natural medicine, & is compassionate, romantic & spiritual. I am a natural medicine practitioner & need a partner. Reply: PO Box 1164, CABOOLTURE 4510.

NATURE WOMAN, 28 yrs, healthy & interesting, naturopath, loves nature & wholesome values, n/s, n/d. Seeking genuine friendships (M & F) & a love (male), to share life. Kylie, 56 Pelican Street, PEREGIAN BEACH 4573.

VEGETARIAN MALE, 48 years, intelligent, slim, n/s, n/d, naturally affectionate & caring. I enjoy the outdoors, gardening & cooking. Seeking a sincere, caring woman (25 to 45), or mother & child, to share simple country lifestyle. Wayne Pollard, PO Box 235, GIN GIN, Qld 4671. Ph: 07-4157-2736.

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VICTORIA

MALE: QUIET, INTROSPECTIVE yet passionate & alive 55 yrs yet fit & healthy. Lover of: folk music, reading ABC radio, the outdoors (esp agric/self-suff & loving/caring for another (female!). Photo appreciated. Reply: Chris (GR143), C/- PO Box 117, SEYMOUR, 3661.

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PLACING AN AD?
See page 75 for details

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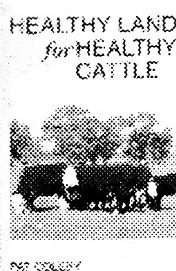
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